

Video the Perfectionist's Watchdog[®] Guide to Fantastic Video

No. 14 \$4.50
Nov / Dec 1992



\$4.50



BEFORE LYNCH... BEFORE CRONENBERG...

CURTIS HARRINGTON

HORROR'S FIRST EXPERIMENTALIST

RARITIES • RETITLINGS • RESTORATIONS



Video the Perfectionist's Watchdog® Guide to Fantastic Video

No. 14
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*"There is often less danger in the things
we fear than the things we desire."*

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KENNEL

LUCAS BALBO is busily screening, cataloging, and critiquing every Jess Franco film in existence, for an English-language book to be published next year by Videodröm in Berlin.

STEPHEN R. BISSETTE is collaborating with former SWAMP THING colleagues Alan Moore, John Totleben, and Rick Veitch on a limited comics series with the working title, 1963. The 7th issue of his graphic horror anthology TABOO is on sale now.

JOHN CHARLES' study of *Planeta Bur* and its Filmgroup offshoots will appear in a future issue of VW. His writing will also soon appear in EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA and MARTIAL ARTS MOVIE ASSOCIATES.

DAVID DEL VALLE interviews Curtis Harrington on his "Sinister Image" compendium **CULT PEOPLE** (Ciné Phile Video, \$19.95). He is currently seeking a publisher for THE ART OF THE HORROR FILM, a coffee table book of the rarest stills from the Del Valle Archives.

G. MICHAEL DOBBS, in an insane moment, bought the animation journal ANIMATO! (of which he is editor), with illustrator and animation

enthusiast Patrick Duquette. Condolences may be sent to their wives c/o VW.

BILL KELLEY's syndicated newspaper column "Primal Screen" is distributed to 32 newspapers by The New York Times Syndicate. He recently completed **SECOND SHOT**, an original crime thriller screenplay, and got Christopher Lee to talk about Hammer's "Dracula" series for FANGORIA.

TIM LUCAS is the author of THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK. He and Barbara Steele wrote the liner notes for Les Baxter's **BLACK SUNDAY/BARON BLOOD** scores, now available on CD from Bay Cities (Culver Studios, 9336 Washington Blvd., Culver City, CA 90230).

SIMONE ROMANO worked as a press agent for the prestigious silent film festival, *Le Giornate di Cinema Muto*, held in Pordenone, Italy, last October 10-18.

ERIK SULEV's in-depth review of John Woo's **HARDBOILED** will appear in ASIAN TRASH CINEMA #3, and he is working with Mike Ferguson on a Barbara Bouchet filmography for EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA #7.

VW THANKS:

CURTIS HARRINGTON and... Amy Alter & Associates (Jill Goldstein), Luana Anders, Chris Dietrich, David C. Fein, FoxVideo (Lewis Lagrone), Lou Gaul (Calkins Newspapers), Eric Hoffman, Image Entertainment (Garrett Lee), Paul Jensen, Alan Jones (Shivers), Mark Kermode, Charles Kilgore, Craig Ledbetter, Michael Lennick, Greg Mank, Don May, MCA Universal (Maria LaMagra, Mark Simpson), Kim Newman, Phil Oppenheim (TNT), Paul M. Sammon, Sinister Cinema (Greg Luce), Gavin Smith, Something Weird Video (Mike Vraney), Brian Thomas, Alan Upchurch, The Voyager Company (Elizabeth Collumb, Wendy Dwyer), Water Bearer Films, Tom Weissner, Stanley Wiater... our contributors, distributors, subscribers, correspondents, and everyone who's bought THE VIDEO WATCHDOG BOOK!

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THE WATCHDOG BARKS



HIS FOURTEENTH

issue of VIDEO WATCHDOG is devoted to the films of Curtis Harrington, dark fantasist *par excellence*. All of Harrington's films—from the cult favorite **NIGHT TIDE** (1961) to his most recent feature, **MATA HARI** (1984)—reveal a preoccupation with the decorous *façades* that people construct to veil the sordid truths of their personal lives. Harrington has perhaps the most European sensibility of all American directors specializing in the *fantastique*, and his influences are also staunchly European. His favorite director is Josef von Sternberg, and he counts Viktor Trivas' **THE HEAD**, Harry Kümel's **DAUGHTERS OF DARKNESS**, and Dario Argento's **INFERNO** among his favorite horror films of the last thirty years. Though absent from the screen for several years, we were heartened to find Harrington armed with a terrifying new screenplay called **CRANIUM**, and poised for a return to active filmmaking.

This timely retrospective coincides with MGM/UA Home Video's welcome release of **WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?** (1971), which Harrington describes as his "best realized" picture. While many of Harrington's films are available on tape, **HELEN** is the first of his *key* works to be released on video; his early experimental shorts (1942-53) and the renowned suspense classic **GAMES** (Universal, 1967) remain outside the reach of the home viewer. This commercial oversight—which this issue hopes to correct—has not only obscured the thematic threads that run throughout Harrington's work, but has also concealed the fact of his considerable influence on later films and filmmakers. The simple truth of the matter

is, Harrington's most important and least compromised achievements have not been available to the public for generations. Such obstacles have led to his undeserved neglect in recent years—not only by the critical establishment, but (despite the immense commercial success of **RUBY**, his most recent US theatrical release) by the industry itself. This issue is an attempt to set the record straight by detailing the extent to which Harrington's unavailable work was influential, and how his available work was or was not compromised by ham-fisted producers and their editing room stooges.

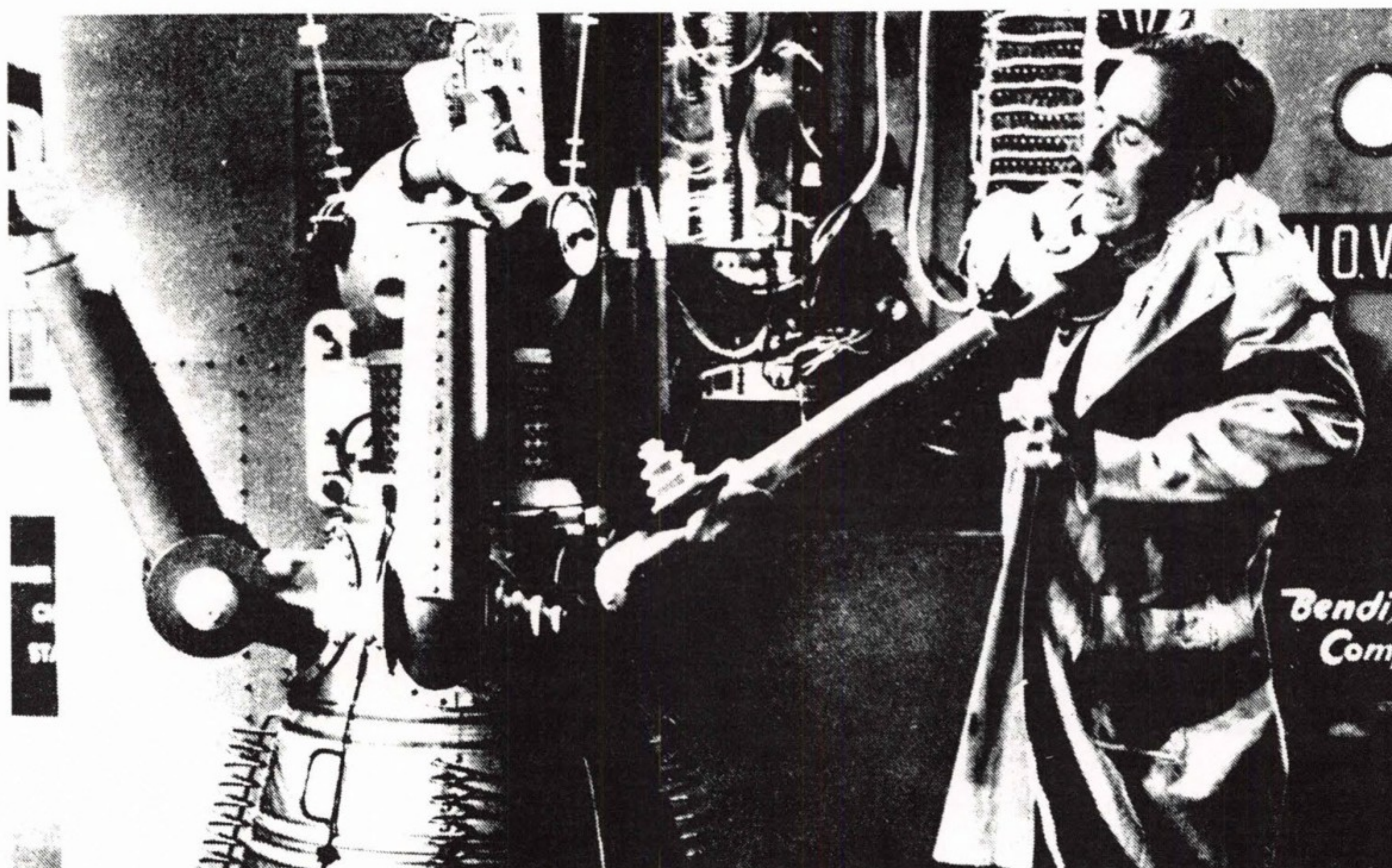
First up is Stephen R. Bissette's overview of Harrington's early career as a West Coast underground filmmaker—a creative period in which the director adapted Poe twice and made the surprisingly prophetic **FRAGMENT OF SEEKING** (1949). Steve's article is followed by an exclusive, in-depth Harrington interview, conducted by Bill Kelley. This amusing, infuriating, and quite definitive record of Harrington's career marks Bill's welcome return to VW, where he last interviewed *MexiMonster dubmeister* Paul Nagel for our hotly-coveted, out-of-print, second issue. Rounding out our coverage are tributes from actress Luana Anders and Harrington's longtime friend and producer George Edwards, and a detailed Videography that tells you everything you need to know to stage a Curtis Harrington Retrospective in your own living room.

• • •

This issue is fondly dedicated to the memory of Florence Marly (1918-78), George Edwards (1924-91), and Anthony Perkins (1932-92). "We all go a little mad sometimes."

• • • • • Tim Lucas

WATCHDOG NEWS



TNT VIEWERS AGOG!



TURNER Network Television, the Atlanta-based cable network, continued its trend of presenting "lost" genre fare last September 11, when 100% WEIRD presented a rare color print of the Ivan Tors production **GOG** (1954). Directed by Herbert L. Strock, the film—starring Richard Egan, Herbert Marshall, Constance Dowling, and William Schallert—was originally photographed in 3-D and color, but has made its few television airings since the early 1960s in flat B&W. TNT's crisp color print was two-dimensional and unusually scratchy, but struck

from the best-looking source materials in existence.

TNT's programming department has kindly informed VW of some of the choicest items scheduled for the coming weeks. Early Tuesday, November 9 at 2:00am, HOLLYWOOD NIGHTS is showing an uncut, remastered print of Michael Reeves' **THE SORCERERS** (1967) with Boris Karloff, which will easily outclass the antiquated (and cut) Allied Artists Home Video version. On Saturday, November 13-14, 100% WEIRD's "Vampire Night" will include a 5:05 AM airing of the extremely rare Paul Landres

film **THE VAMPIRE** (1957), starring John Beal and Coleen Gray. The following night's monthly MONSTERVISION broadcast includes a 4:00 AM showing of Paul Landres' **THE RETURN OF DRACULA** (1958) with Francis Lederer; not only does this version carry the film's original theatrical title—the TV version was called **THE CURSE OF DRACULA**—but it should contain the climactic color sequence in the mining shaft. Also

Dr. Zeitman (John Wengraf) in the grip of GOG.

worth circling in your TV GUIDE is the 5:20 AM postscript to the November 20 100% WEIRD, when some unspecified "Weird Shorts" will be shown. Finally, scheduled for early Tuesday, November 24 at 1:10 AM, is a slightly mis-scheduled "Happy Birthday, Boris Karloff" triple-feature of Edward Dmytryk's excellent **THE DEVIL COMMANDS** (1941) and two Nick Grinde programmers, **THE MAN WITH NINE LIVES** (1940) and **THE MAN THEY COULD NOT HANG** (1939).

TNT also continues their groundbreaking trend of letterboxed broadcasts with Stanley Kubrick's **2001: A SPACE ODYSSEY** (November 19, 8:00 PM) and—a Thanksgiving treat for those of you without laserdisc players—George Pal's **THE TIME MACHINE** (November 26, 8:00 PM). These, presumably, will also be presented in stereo.

Furthermore, on Sunday, November 29, TNT will take the unprecedented step of letterboxing *an entire day* of movies! (If letterboxing is good enough for MTV and Hidden Valley salad dressing commercials, why the hell not?) The letterboxed schedule: **THE TIME MACHINE** (10:00 AM), Douglas Trumbull's **BRAINSTORM** (12:15 PM), John Milius' **THE WIND AND THE LION** (2:30 PM), **VICTOR/VICTORIA** (5:00 PM), **HOW THE WEST WAS WON** (8:00 PM), Michael Crichton's **WESTWORLD** (11:00 PM), Richard Fleischer's **SOYLENT GREEN** (1:00 AM), and **THE TEAHOUSE OF THE AUGUST MOON** (3:00 AM).

Gone With the Wind

When Hurricane Andrew swept through the Miami suburb of Homestead, Florida last August, it destroyed thousands of homes, upset tens of thousands of lives, and left three unexpected victims

in its wake—Craig Ledbetter and Tom Weisser's publications **EUROPEAN TRASH CINEMA** and **ASIAN TRASH CINEMA**, and the Pompano Joe Torrez mail-order company, Video Search of Miami. Contrary to exaggerated rumor, neither business was put asunder by the disaster, though extensive damage was felt by both.

According to Craig Ledbetter, ETC and ATC suffered most in terms of materials literally carried away by Hurricane Andrew. Among the lost items were the planned cover and contents of ATC #3, the original boards for ETC #'s 2, 5, and 6—making it impossible to ever reprint them—and a significant portion of the ETC/ATC back issue supply. The first two issues of ETC are now completely gone, with #'s 5 and 6 in extremely short supply. ETC #3 and #4 were untouched. The premiere issue of ATC is still available, but you can consider your copy of ATC #2 a rare collector's item. Tom and Craig (who also lost their printer to Andrew) conservatively estimate that ATC #3 will appear before the end of the year, with ETC #7 following in early 1993.

Video Search of Miami—a reliable mail-order company specializing in rare European titles—suffered some duplication deck damage and a loss of approximately 200 titles from their master recordings library, but are reportedly already back on their feet and filling mail and telephone orders.

The End of an Era

We are sad to report that Marshall Discount Video Service—the Trenton, Michigan-based mailorder company whose ads appeared on every "Postal Zone" page of **FANGORIA** since their 14th issue—has gone out of business.



ADDRESSES

SINISTER CINEMA

P.O. Box 4369
Medford, OR 97501-0168
(503) 773-6860

SOMETHING WEIRD VIDEO

c/o Mike Vraney
P.O. Box 33664
Seattle, WA 98133
(206) 361-3759

VIDEO SEARCH OF MIAMI

P.O. Box 161917
Miami, FL 33115
(305) 387-6807

ANIMATION:

VIDEO DIMENSIONS

530 West 23rd St.
New York, NY 10011

WHOLE TOON ACCESS

P.O. Box 369
Issaquah, WA 98027
(206) 391-8747

ASIAN VIDEO:

NYUE ENTERPRISES

61-A Walker St., 2nd Floor
New York, NY 10013

LASERDISCS & JAPANESE IMPORTS:

LASER'S EDGE

2103 N. Veteran's Parkway
Suite 100
Bloomington, IL 61704
(309) 662-9347

LASER ISLAND

1810 Voorhies Avenue,
Brooklyn, NY 11235
(718) 743-2425

SIGHT AND SOUND

27 Jones Road
Waltham, MA 02154
(617) 894-8633



Video Around the World

USA

By Tim Lucas

CROPPED XENOMORPHS AND GARGANTUAS

A NOTE ON TIMINGS

The timings listed for the following NTSC tapes reflect only the length of the film itself, and do not include such ephemera as video company logos, FBI warnings, supplementary trailers, or MPAA ratings certificates. The only exceptions to this rule are those films in which the soundtrack is first heard while the distributor's logo is still onscreen.

ALIEN³

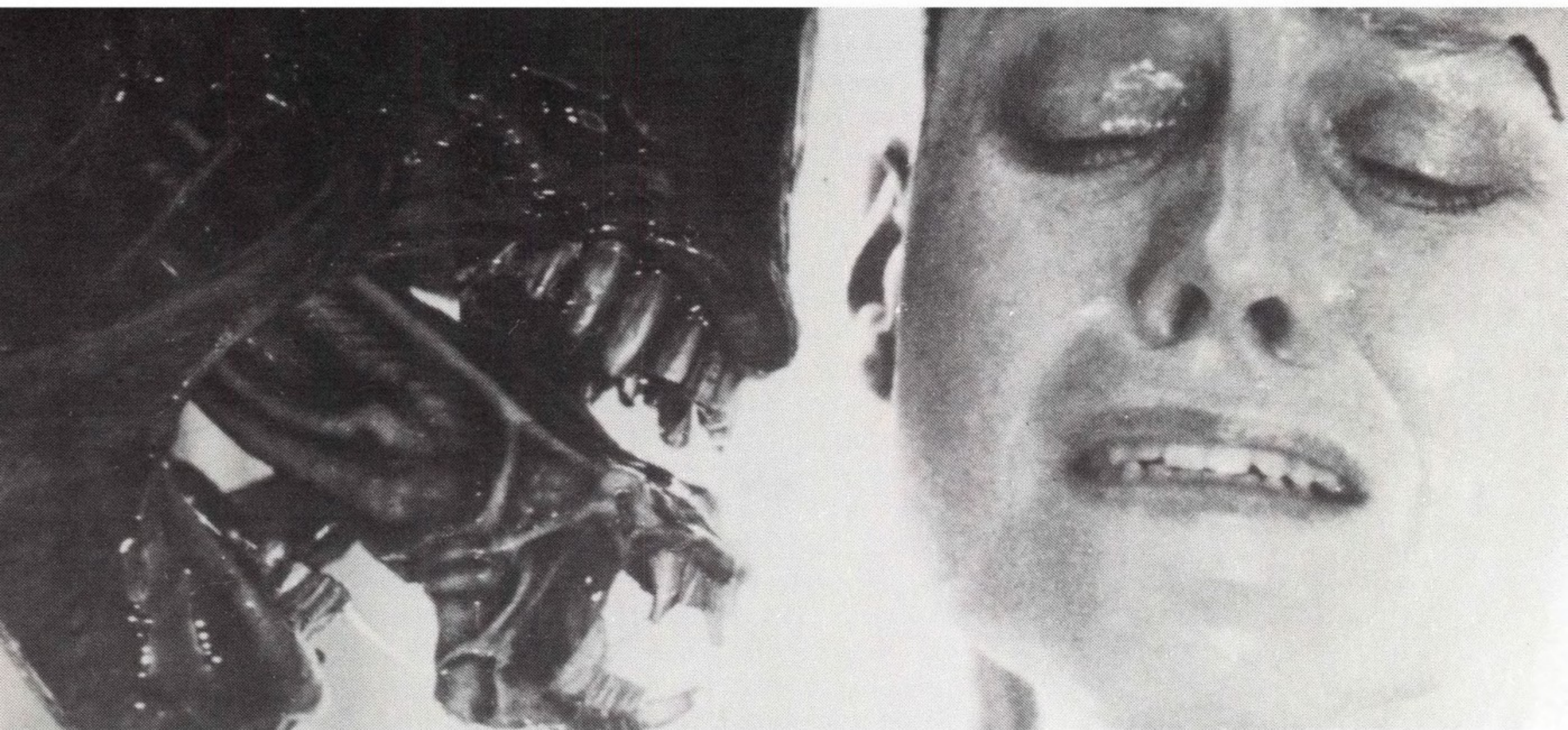
1992, FoxVideo, D/S-SS,
\$94.98, 114m 41s

When an alien stowaway is detected on the Sulaco escape vehicle, a hypersleep chamber containing the ship's only survivor—the impregnated Lt. Ripley (Sigourney Weaver)—is catapulted to a landing on Fiorina "Fury" 161, a Class C prison planet housing a host of born-again "Double Y Chromo" rapists and murderers. Of course, a facehugger is also along for the ride, which later uses a prisoner's dog as its maternal host, resulting in a strange four-legged, tail-wagging xenomorph. Weaver gives her usual good performance, but it's a letdown to see this character—Ridley Scott's desperate survivor and Jim Cameron's bitch warrior—literally shaved of her sexual identity and reduced to "kill me" pleas and morning sickness. Recklessly scored and scripted, and indifferently acted by a vaguely defined supporting cast (I just watched the film and couldn't possibly tell you who *lived*, much less who *died*), this is not a disaster—simply a

bland finale to an outstanding series. FoxVideo's cassette begins very promisingly, with the first 6m 54s handsomely letterboxed at 2.35:1 (just long enough to fool the viewer into thinking a happy mistake has been made), before zooming into the usual cropped frame ratio. At times, the cutting from one side of the screen to the other actually works to the movie's benefit, bringing a liveliness to David Fincher's lethargic "long take" technique that isn't limited to elementary film school "cross cutting." Only one image suffers noticeably in translation: the famous shot of the drooling alien

KEY

CC	Closed Captioned
D	Digital
HF	Hi-Fi
LB	Letterboxed
LD	Laserdisc
MA	Multiple Audio
NSR	No Suggested Retail
OP	Out of Print
S	Stereo
SS	Surround Sound



A terrific image from a mediocre film: Sigourney Weaver and her significant other in *ALIEN*³.

leering at Ripley's throat, which Fox heavily promoted with letter-boxed clips; that single shot now contains about half as many edits as **PSYCHO**'s shower murder. (Haven't these guys heard about Super 35mm?) The stereo surround sound design is rousing and clever, particularly during the presentation of the 20th Century Fox logo.

BLOOD AND ROSES

1960, Paramount/Gateway Video
6101, HF/CC, \$9.95 (EP/SLP),
73m 33s

Roger Vadim's *Et Mourir de plaisir* ("And Die of Pleasure") has fallen into obscurity over the years due to a scarcity of uncut prints. An original running time of 87m has been widely recorded, but the version preserved here is identical to the most complete version currently circulating in Europe, reincorporating lesbian situations and brief instances of nudity deleted from Paramount's 1961 theatrical release prints. This modern interpretation of Sheridan le Fanu's "Carmilla" may take

more liberties with its source than Hammer's **THE VAMPIRE LOVERS** (1970), but it is also a far more complex, disturbing and erotic work than that overrated attempt.

Annette Vadim stars as Carmilla von Karnstein, whose repressed affections for betrothed cousin Leopoldo (Mel Ferrer) come to the surface when her family's ancestral crypt is accidentally bombed, allowing her to become possessed by the untombed spirit of her lookalike vampiric ancestor Millarca... or does it simply open the door for her to indulge this morbid, death-wish fantasy?

Vampirism exists in the film solely on the level of Millarca's voice-over narration, which (as it is Vadim's own dubbed voice) can be interpreted as either real or delusional. Here, vampires not only drink blood but absorb the color from flowers, a fact which Claude Renoir's Technicolor photography exploits by hovering slightly above the level of B&W, as if to dramatize the tenuousness of life itself; indeed, the film crosses over into total monochrome for its most unreal passages—including Elsa

Martinelli's dreamed encounter with Millarca in an operating theater with a bare-breasted female patient and several colorless surgeons garbed in *blood red* rubber gloves (a scene presented here for the first time in this country). Jean Prodromides' exquisite score goes against the grain of the action—accompanying frenetic chases with gentle Irish harp pluckings—as if to suggest that the fear of death is insignificant from the eternal perspective of our narrator.

Originally filmed in Technirama (a short-lived 2.34:1 process, distributed domestically in 2.35:1 Cinemascope prints), **BLOOD AND ROSES** has more than enough pedigree to warrant letter-boxing, but it is just as important to see this spellbinding film complete, without commercial interruptions, as it would be to see the entire frame. This tape—like Paramount's other EP/SLP releases via Gateway Video—was recorded with "Master Sharp"—which the box describes as "a unique high-speed process for outstanding EP/SLP sound and picture quality." The Hi-Fi sound may be impressive,

but the color stability and image resolution have lost far more by being recorded in the six-hour mode than they've gained from this dubious process. Is there *anyone* who would not have paid ten dollars more for an SP master?

BRIDES OF DRACULA

1960, MCA Universal Home Video 80606, HF, \$14.98, 85m 4s

Terence Fisher's follow-up to **HORROR OF DRACULA** (1958) involves Van Helsing (Peter Cushing) in the tragic case of Baron Meinster (David Peel), a wealthy nobleman seduced into decadence and vampirism, who escapes his domestic prison—where he has subsisted for years on the blood of his own mother (Martita Hunt)—to wreak havoc at a neighboring school for young women. Excellent performances abound, particularly Frieda Jackson as the Baron's former nurse—rattled to cackling madness by the flight of her young charge—and Andrée

Melly as the envious schoolmate of the Baron's fiancée (Yvonne Monlaur), perhaps the most wickedly photogenic of all Dracula brides. (Her fellow bride, incidentally, is played by Marie Devereaux—the bosomy Kali of Fisher's **THE STRANGLERS OF BOMBAY** [1959].) As exciting as its classic predecessor and perhaps even more inventive, **BRIDES** has been transferred to home video from a dazzling Technicolor source, preserving all the chromatic marvels of Jack Asher's cinematography; with every new camera set-up, there is some new and unexpected color to take your breath away. The image is cropped from the original ratio, with minimal loss.

DANGER: DIABOLIK

1968, Paramount/Gateway Video 6727, HF/CC, \$9.95, 99m 37s (EP/SLP)

The great Mario Bava directed this colorful, witty, fast-moving adaptation of Angela and Luciana

Giussani's *Diabolik*, a cornerstone of the Italian comics scene since 1962. John Philip Law and Marisa Mell (who recently died of throat cancer) bear an uncanny resemblance to their comic book counterparts—the master criminal Diabolik and his gorgeous muse/lover Eva Kant—and give the performances of their often two-dimensional careers. Diabolik and Eva are turned-on by one another on a level that recalls Elvis and Ann-Margret in **VIVA LAS VEGAS**, Lula and Sailor in **WILD AT HEART**, and little else; Bava's films are always delirious, but this one stands virtually alone in his *oeuvre* as being deliriously happy and loving.

Given a \$3,000,000 budget by producer Dino DeLaurentiis, Bava completed this film for only \$400,000, creating the film's most impressive sets with miniatures, mattes, and mirrors; the establishing view of Valmont (Adolfo Celi)'s plane is nothing more than black paint on a sheet of glass! Bava's strong identification with

Elsa Martinelli finds a strange bedfellow in this bizarre, excised scene from BLOOD AND ROSES.





John Philip Law and Marisa Mell, perfectly cast in Mario Bava's *DANGER: DIABOLIK*.

Diabolik is conveyed by the fact that the anti-hero uses many of Bava's own deceptive methods to thwart the affable Inspector Jinko (Michel Piccoli). Ennio Morricone's score is a weird *mélange* of hyperkinetic guitar riffs and stings, **ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST** arias, Miles-like horn blasts (*à la* **THE CAT O'NINE TAILS**), and a recurring use of sitar that suggests Diabolik's genius for crime as a state of perverse enlightenment.

The film's true running time has always been a source of confusion. Italian references claim 105m, London's *MONTHLY FILM BULLETIN* 88m, the US pressbook 102m, and Walt Lee's *REFERENCE GUIDE TO FANTASTIC FILMS* clocks the domestic release at 99m. Whatever the truth may be,

this cassette version contains one sequence not included in US theatrical prints—a bizarre, extended discotheque scene that ends with a joint being passed along a queue of progressively stranger-looking hippies—and features a letterboxed (1.85:1) Italian main titles sequence that preserves the original title, *Diabolik*. The sound quality is excellent, the synchronization of the post-sync dialogue has been improved over theatrical prints (only Piccoli and Celi don't dub their own voices), and the image is noticeably superior to Paramount's other recent EP/SLP "Master Sharp" releases. The most successful of all comics-based movies at evoking the style and verve of the comics medium, **DANGER: DIABOLIK** is a must-see.

DRACULA (Spanish Version)

1931, MCA Universal Home Video 81123, HF, \$14.98, 103m 8s

Thanks to scholar David J. Skal (whose book *HOLLYWOOD GOTHIC* created renewed interest in this cause), Universal has finally collaborated with the *Cinemateca de Cuba* to prepare this fully restored version of George Melford's long-unavailable Hispanic **DRACULA**, filmed simultaneously with Tod Browning's original Bela Lugosi classic. True to its legend, the film is technically far superior to its English-language counterpart; its elaborate dolly moves are heady and liberating, and the materials themselves—with the exception of the 9m 55s third reel, which was recovered in rough condition from Cuba—are in crisp, excellent condition, looking more contemporaneous with Universal's **SON OF DRACULA** (1943) than Browning's creaky telling. In particular, the footage of the Vespa's haunted, storm-tossed passage to England—which has no real counterpart in Browning's version—is as thrilling as anything Universal ever put on the screen.

The performances are sometimes broad—Eduardo Arozmena's Van Helsing seems closer to caricature than characterization—but seldom less than effective. Lupita Tovar is a winning heroine, and it must be said that Pablo Alvarez Rubio ("Ratas... ratas... ratas!") is one of the screen's great Renfields. As *El Conde Dracula*, Carlos Villarias bears a striking resemblance to Lugosi but his performance is charged with more feral intensity than eerie, sepulchral charm; it is a likeable, if undistinguished interpretation. It's tempting to overrate the film, but we must remember that—like Browning's film—it is disappointing as an



Pablo Alvarez Rubio is one of the screen's great Renfields in George Melford's newly restored Spanish DRACULA.

adaptation of Stoker's novel, which is here further compromised by English subtitles that are more literal than graceful. Memorable dialogue like "There are far worse things awaiting man... than death" becomes "Something worse than death lies in wait for the living," and the evocative "wolfbane" becomes the botanical and unresonant "aconite." These quibbles aside, the subtitled also contains some startling revelations, such as Tovar's confession of Dracula's visit to her bedside, which left her feeling "weak... as if I'd just lost my virginity." In any case, Melford's film ranks highly among the Universal horror classics, and we readily admit that its release on video is the horror event of the year.

The main title cards are windowboxed and scored with a curious, alternate orchestration of "Swan Lake." The running time listed previously covers only the film itself, which is preceded by a charming, 4m 21s, videotaped introduction by Lupita Tovar.

FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL

1973, Paramount/Gateway Video 8485, HF/CC, \$9.95, 89m 23s (EP/SLP)

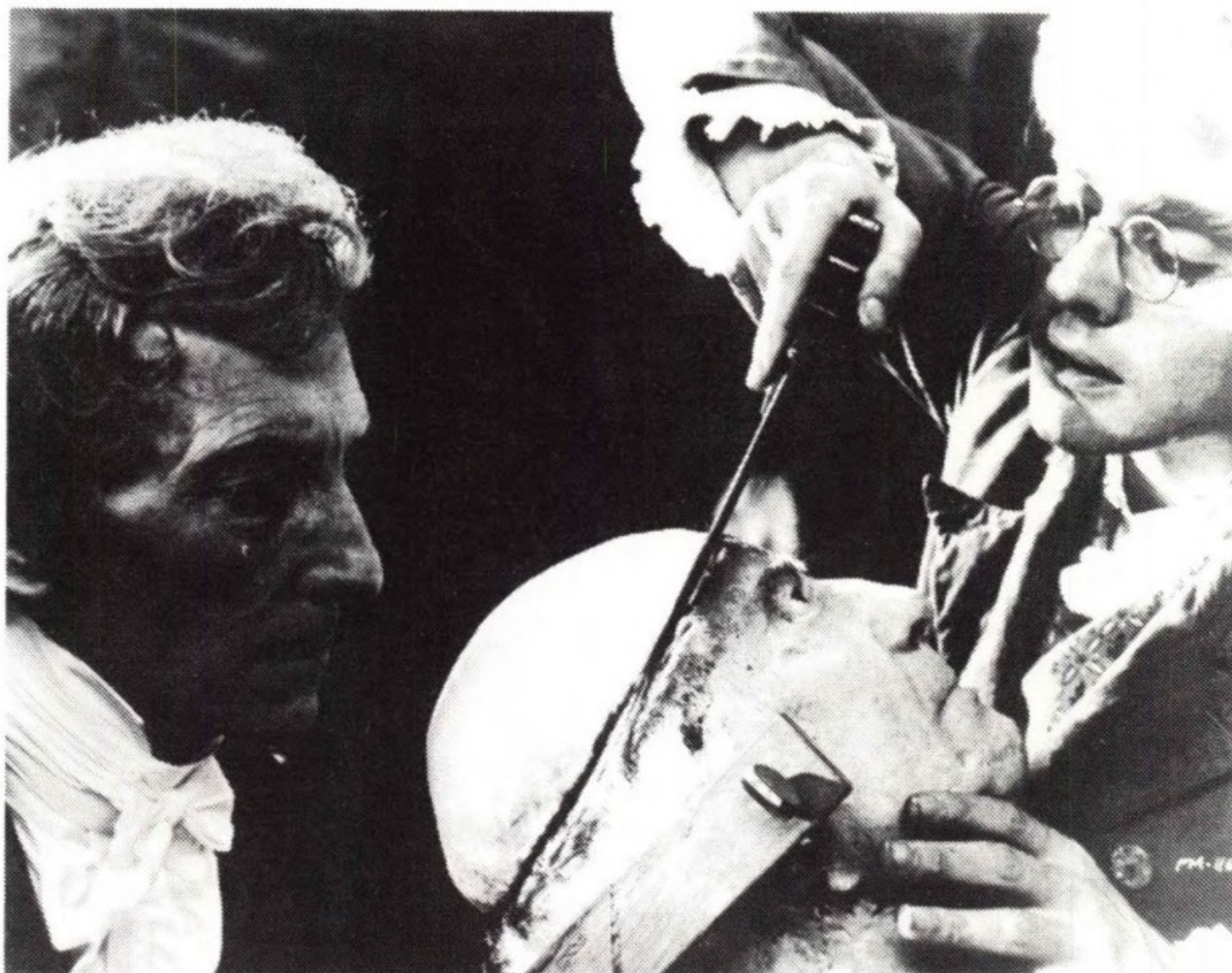
This long-awaited US video debut of Terence Fisher's swan song has been badly botched. Not only have Paramount directly consigned this important release directly to the EP/SLP budget bins, they've issued a butchered TV print that is actually far less complete than the version occasionally shown on the USA Cable Network! Among the missing (or abbreviated) pieces: a more sustained view of a corpse (Bernard Lee) with amputated hands, whose casket loses its lid when dropped by pallbearers; the Baron (Peter Cushing) assisting the attachment of the missing hands to his Monster (David Prowse) by clamping the peripheral artery with his teeth, then gargling water and spitting it into a basin; an eyeball being slipped into the Monster's hollow socket; most of the extended brain

surgery sequence, including the sopping of blood trickling from the scalpular incision, the snipping of the anterior ligaments and spinal cord, and the climactic removal of the brain itself; the splashing of the Monster's removed brain into a floor basin, which is then accidentally knocked over by the Baron (a scene that appears intact in Paramount Home Video's PG-rated **IT CAME FROM HOLLYWOOD**); a gurgling closeup of the Asylum Director (John Stratton)'s bloody throat after the Monster gores him with a broken bottle; the inmates ripping the Monster to shreds with their bare hands, and the final medium shot of the disemboweled creature. Roughly 4m have been excised, and we do mean roughly; most of the cuts are accompanied by audible jumps in the soundtrack. The sorry state of this print is all the more regrettable since the sound and color are vivid, though the resolution is a bit softer than it ought to be. The box carries the 93m film's original R rating. [Film reviewed VW 10:25.]

KISS ME QUICK!

1964, *Something Weird Video*,
\$23.00 ppd.

Something Weird's new distribution deal with Boxoffice International mogul Harry Novak has borne immediate fruit with the release of this legendary SF/Horror nudie. Sterilox (Fred Coe), an asexual ambassador from the dying planet Droopiter in the Buttless galaxy, descends to earth to investigate the varieties of earthly breeding stock. The mad scientist Dr. Breedlove (Jackie DeWitt) treats Sterilox to a grand tour of his laboratory, where the bulbous alien is less attracted to his host's dancing sex robots than to his soda machine. The strippers are unusually attractive for such a low-budget film, but the film's erotic charge is equally due to the great Laszlo Kovacs' colorful, tactile photography (post-**INCREDIBLY STRANGE CREATURES...**, pre-**TARGETS**), who keeps every downy thigh and stretch mark in razor-sharp focus. With his lipstick scars and orthopedic neckbrace, DeWitt's Breedlove suggests the kind of horror host we might have seen, had The Playboy Channel existed in the 1960s. Coe's Sterilox, a Stan Laurel imitation delivered in clownface, is less memorable than his cameo as Frankenstein's Monster, photos of which used to appear (in cropped form) in the perennially G-rated **FAMOUS MONSTERS OF FILMLAND**. Buy this tape and see what Forry couldn't show you! Prior to this video release, **KISS ME QUICK!** was so hard to see that, for years, it was wrongfully attributed to Russ Meyer; it was actually co-directed by Pete Perry and Max Gardens under the joint pseudonym "Seymour Tuchas." Print and transfer quality are both superb and the color is vivid.



*Peter Cushing and Shane Briant cut off a little more than we can view in **FRANKENSTEIN AND THE MONSTER FROM HELL**.*

*Frankenstein's Monster (Fred Coe) and one of the "Sex Fizz" dancers in **KISS ME QUICK!***



MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE

1932, MCA Universal Home Video
81301, D, \$14.98, 60m 19s

As recompense for losing the directorial reigns of **FRANKENSTEIN**, Robert Florey worked with that film's proposed star—Bela Lugosi—in this first sound adaptation of Edgar Allan Poe. Lugosi stars as Dr. Mirakle, a crazed Darwinian scientist whose determination to establish the kinship between Man and Ape (“the darkness before the Dawn of Man”) has banished his rantings to the tents of travelling carnivals in 1845 Paris. After a series of failed attempts to blend the blood of an orangutan with the “rotten” blood of prostitutes, Mirakle sees a chance for success when he encounters the virginal Camille (Sidney Fox), whose fiancé Pierre Dupin (Leon Ames, née Waycoff) is attempting to solve the streetwalker murders with medical science. (Mirakle seizes control of Camille when Erik steals her bonnet, reminding us of the white scarf stolen by Lugosi's Murder Legendre in **WHITE ZOMBIE**.)

With Lugosi's awesome, crepuscular menace evident from the get-go, the groundbreaking detective elements of Poe's original story are ignored in favor of tedious romance, Germanic set design, and Guignolian grandeur—all presented in the broadest possible strokes. Despite its excesses, **MURDERS** still manages to chill; unlike many of Universal's horror classics, which have aged venerably and kept little of their original sting intact, Florey's film still conveys a potent sense of the hideous. The sequence in which Lugosi abducts and scrapes the flesh from a “Woman of the Streets” (Arlene Francis)—strapped to a cross-beam later used to similar purpose in the climax of Edgar Ulmer's **THE BLACK CAT** (1934)—remains



Bela Lugosi confers with henchman Noble Johnson over the sleeping form of abducted Sidney Fox in **MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE**.

shocking, though even darker possibilities seem to lurk behind Lugosi's unspeakable smile, in a number of masterful close shots by cameraman Karl Freund. John Huston (age 25) is credited with “Additional Dialogue.”

MCA's transfer is nice and sharp, with a wonderfully quiet digital soundtrack that offsets women's screams all too piercingly well. The source print carries as many scars and speckles as one might expect from a B-picture of this vintage.

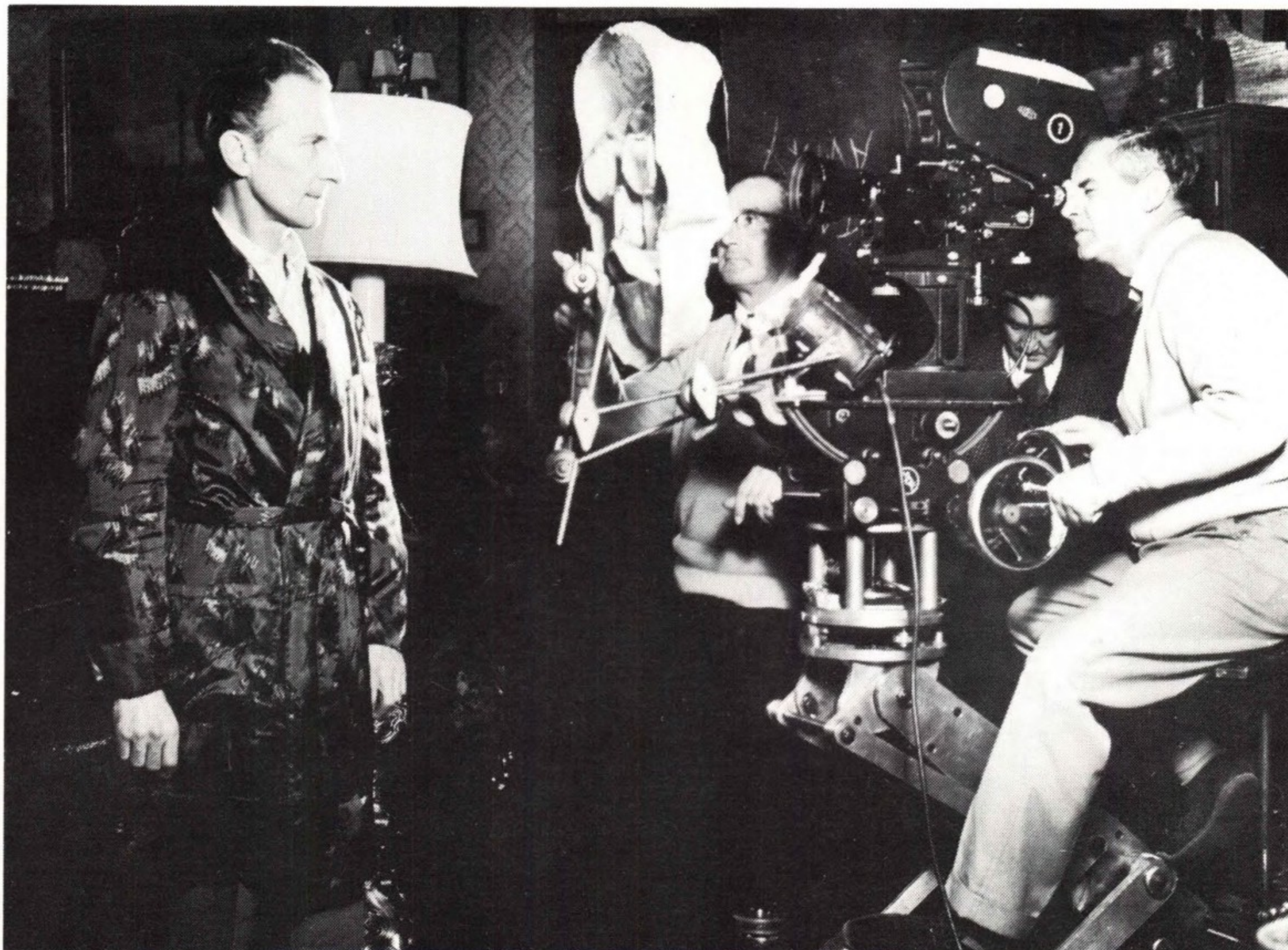
THE SKULL

1965, Paramount/Gateway Video
6513, HF/CC, \$9.95, 82m 57s
(EP/SLP)

Based on Robert Bloch's story “The Skull of the Marquis de Sade,” this is easily Freddie Francis' most accomplished directorial outing, and the best of all Bloch adaptations after **PSYCHO**. Peter Cushing stars as an author and collector of occult memorabilia, driven to criminal acts after acquiring the demonically possessed skull of Donatien Alphonse François, comte de Sade (1740-1814). If one can look past the script's

inflammatory misperceptions of Sade and his contributions to philosophy and literature, it does address some extraordinarily loaded subjects, such as the invisible line that separates one's “research materials” from dangerous obsessions. A splendidly morbid score by Elizabeth Lutyens carries the viewer through some of Francis' greatest “pure cinema” passages, notably a feverish climax in which 24m pass virtually without dialogue. Possibly the best-cast horror film of the 1960s, **THE SKULL** features uniformly strong support from Christopher Lee (as the skull's previous owner), Patrick Wymark (as the seedy occult trafficker Marco), Peter Woodbridge (as his seedier landlord), Jill Bennett (as Cushing's protective wife), and Nigel Green and Patrick Magee as two police officers.

The Techniscope (2.35:1) frame has been halved to full-screen proportions, with additional side-to-side edits introduced in the scanning process; the main credits unfold in a nice but still incomplete 2.0:1 letterbox. The “Master Sharp” image is a mite softer than the version shown on Turner



Cinematographer John Wilcox photographs Peter Cushing through an unusual three-dimensional matte for THE SKULL.

Network Television, but this mesmerizing, fluidly choreographed film is best appreciated without commercial interruptions, making this cassette a must despite its compromises.

THE TOY BOX

1971, *Something Weird Video*, \$23.00 ppd., 89m 6s

Ralph (Evan Steel) convinces his girlfriend Donna (Ann Myers) to participate in a bizarre party, where the guests have been invited to perform erotic plays in the presence of his millionaire uncle's corpse, after which they will be rewarded with gifts from his "toy box." When the mansion's doors lock at midnight, while awaiting their turn onstage, Ralph and Donna discover evi-

dence that the evening's players are being murdered by a madman posing as the dead uncle. All of the plays are horrific or fantasy-oriented: a drive-in theater

seduction ends in a gory stabbing; a butcher engages in necrophilia with a zombie; a picnic tryst culminates in deformity and a pitchfork murder; and Russ



I F YOU PRESS "PLAY" on Chapter 26 of Image Entertainment's **THE THING FROM ANOTHER WORLD** laserdisc—the

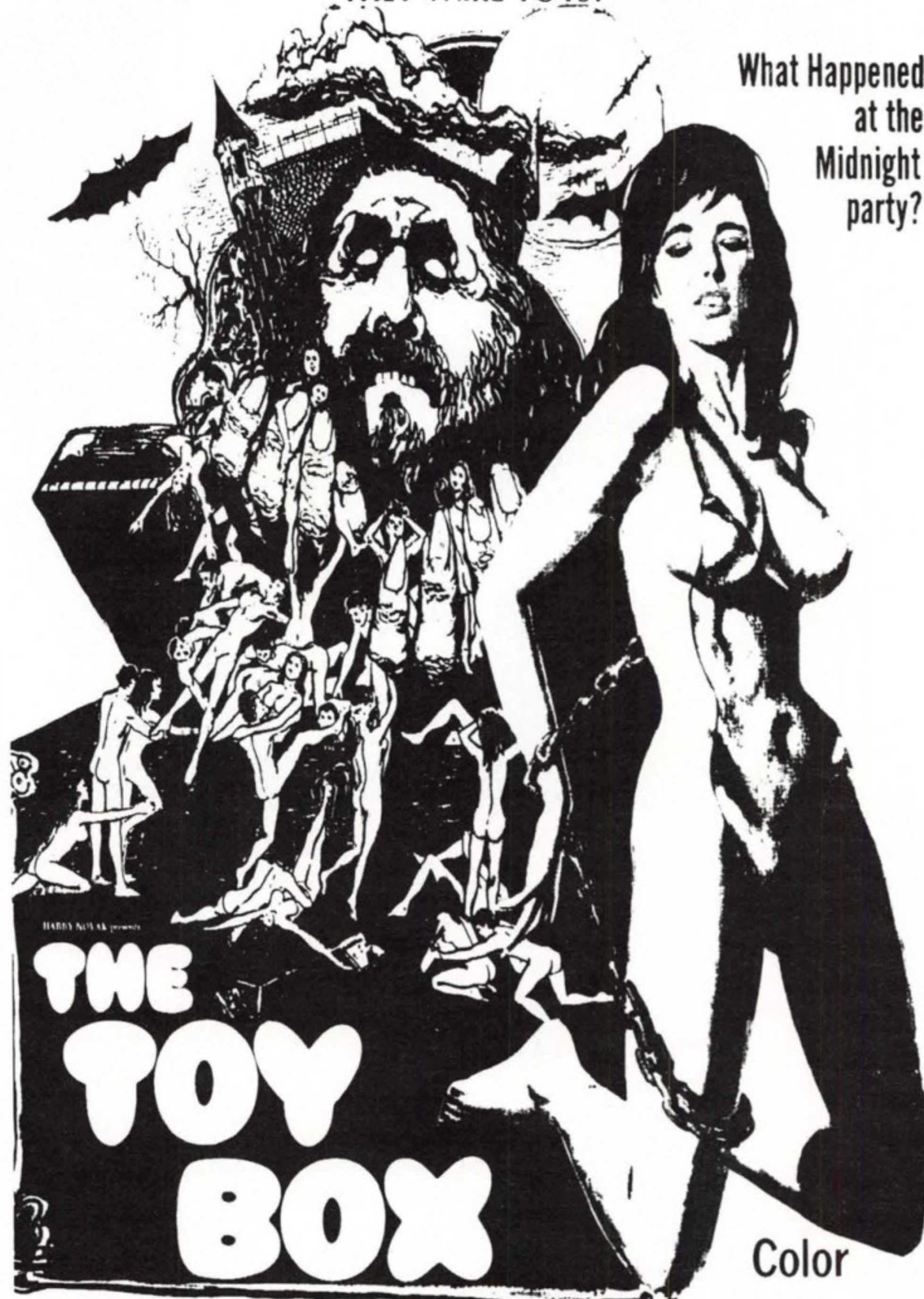
CAV chapter that contains the text of John W. Campbell's original story—you will hear the following on the soundtrack: "Can you read me? We found something in the ice... We need some help down here... Can anybody hear me?"

The uncredited voice and sound effects were taken from Universal's trailer for John Carpenter's 1982 remake!

—Nick Burton, Newport Beach, CA

**A PANDORA'S BOX OF FREUDIAN DEPRAVITY
BIZARRE, SHOCKING BEYOND BELIEF**

HE TWISTED WOMEN IN HIS HANDS AS THOUGH
THEY WERE TOYS!



What Happened
at the
Midnight
party?

Admission restricted: Persons under 18 not allowed!

Meyer regular Uschi Digard (who often worked without billing in Boxoffice International releases) appears as a woman who is molested, then beheaded by her own bed. This eerie, erotic film—clearly influenced by William Castle's **HOUSE ON HAUNTED HILL** and Bert I. Gordon's **ATTACK OF THE PUPPET PEOPLE**—was written and directed by Ron Garcia, who most recently photo-

graphed David Lynch's **TWIN PEAKS FIRE WALK WITH ME**. This marks the film's first intact North American video release; it was previously issued in a censored version on a Canadian label, and distributed uncut in Australia under the title **THE ORGY BOX**. On the copy we viewed, a 4m portion of the orgy sequence was shown twice, bringing the total running time to 93m 6s.

**WAR OF THE
GARGANTUAS**

1966, Paramount/Gateway Video
12859, HF/CC, \$9.95, 91m 54s
(EP/SLP)

Inoshiro Honda's **Fuhranken-shutain No Kaiju—Sanda Tai Gailah** ("The Frankenstein Invasion: Sanda vs. Gailah," 1966) is slightly longer in this English-language version, but far less coherent than the 88m original (still available as a letterboxed Japanese import laserdisc on Toho Video TLL2384, ¥6180). **WAR**, which wasn't released in the US until 1970, eliminates all references to the film's status as a sequel to **FRANKENSTEIN CONQUERS THE WORLD** [*Fuhrankenshutain tai Barugon*, 1966] by deleting some key scenes and inventing a new mythos about two hairy giant siblings—one green and violent, the other brown and peaceful—whose fundamental differences lead to gargantuan sumo wrestling in the streets of Tokyo. Hero Russ Tamblyn, looking sleepy and suspicious, sizes things up with stoic wisdom like: "Brother against brother... sounds like some countries I know. Maybe this time the nonviolent one will win, huh?" Special effects master Eiji Tsubaraya conjures some of his most haunting effects here, particularly one fisherman's POV shot of the Green Gargantua standing on the ocean floor below his boat, staring up at him through still, clear waters. "Fortunately, we've made sure the [giant] action fits snugly inside your TV," says the Rising Sun design on the video box. Did they ever! Haijime Koizume's panoramic Tohoscope (2.35:1) compositions have been cut in half with a predictably aggravating pan-scan transfer; that said, the sound and picture quality of this "Master Sharp" cassette is slightly better than most other EP/SLP recordings.

ANIMATION

By G. Michael Dobbs

BEST OF THE VAN BUREN STUDIO

Video Dimensions, \$29.95, 50m

Founded in the 1920s by Amandee Van Buren and Paul Terry, the Van Buren studio produced the consistently horrible silent "Farmer Alfalfa" shorts. After Terry left to form Terrytoons, Van Buren—strictly a businessman—struck a releasing arrangement with RKO and, under the creative leadership of Burt Gillette (the director responsible for Disney's "The Three Little Pigs,") produced a very uneven body of cartoons between 1928-36. This tape presents cartoons made during the studio's latter years, including an adaptation of Fontaine Fox's classic comic strip *Toonerville Trolley*, and an attempt to update Felix the Cat to the sound era. Despite numerous attempts to develop their own continuing characters and adapt popular comic strips, the Van Buren studio closed when Disney struck his own distribution deal with RKO. Although the



animation in these later shorts was quite good, the studio seemed to have significant problems with stories. Despite their flaws, I found these cartoons always involving.

BETTY BOOP'S DIZZY DOZEN

Video Dimensions, \$29.95, 90m

There are many public domain collections of Fleischer Studio cartoons in every discount department and video store on the planet, but **BETTY BOOP'S DIZZY DOZEN** contains only a couple that have turned up on earlier collections. This tape reflects the changes in animation style which happened at the Fleischer Studio from the early to mid-'30s. The early shorts, such as "Up to Mars" (1930) are rough affairs with little thought to story or character design. Compared to the nifty silent "Ko-Ko" cartoons of a few years earlier, one can see how the arrival of sound knocked the Fleischer studio, along with everyone else in animation, for a loop.

The setback was obviously not permanent, and this collection features a decent cross-section of Screen Songs, Talkartoons, and Boops. One sees how Betty Boop evolved from a crude dog-like character, to a flapper, to a middle class working woman all in 90m! Unfortunately, the two-color Cinecolor "Poor Cinderella" (1934) is featured here in a B&W TV print. The transfer quality is quite acceptable, although "Dinah" (1933)—a Screen Song featuring the Mills Brothers—is missing the title song in the center of the cartoon! (Another video music rights casualty?)

SPEAKING OF ANIMALS

USA Home Video, 45m

This collection of strange short subjects has a fascinating history. The legendary animation director



Tex Avery conceived of a one-reel series that would feature live-action footage of animals with animated mouths. Shot in B&W, the animation was so cleverly integrated that there was a startling illusion of animals actually talking. The series started in 1941, the year before Avery began his tenure at MGM, and was released by Paramount through 1949. Apparently, Avery worked only on the first three, none of which is included in this collection. What is included, however, are six of the shorts, two of which won the Oscar for Best Short Subject in 1942 and 1944. They are only moderately amusing, with a tiresome formula of an announcer setting up straight lines for the animals. Only "Fun On the Farm," featuring radio star Bob Burns, consistently amuses. The tape's box claims that there are excerpts from two more shorts in the collection, but they are nowhere to be found; the collection's running time is listed as "approximately 60 minutes." The quality of the materials and transfer are fine, although USA Home Video ends the tape with trailers for other tapes aimed at a strictly adult market. If

your audience is composed of small children, make sure to eject the tape after the singing bears.

A TRIBUTE TO WINSOR McCAY

Video Dimensions, \$29.95, 55m

Outside of an archival showing, **A TRIBUTE TO WINSOR McCAY** collection offers one of the few opportunities to see the work of the true father of animation. Although Emile Cohl was chronologically ahead of McCay, the creator of the *Little Nemo in Slumberland* and *Dream of a Rarebit Fiend* newspaper strips was the first artist to enjoy widespread acclaim for his beautifully composed, animated short subjects. "**Gertie the Dinosaur**" (1909) remains a masterful example of character animation, and the historic drama McCay achieved with his "**The Sinking of the Lusitania**" (1918) still has impact. Print quality varies substantially here, and one pines to see the original materials. The quality is not so bad as to deter viewing, however, and "**Little Nemo**" (1911) includes the rarely-seen, hand-painted color sequence.

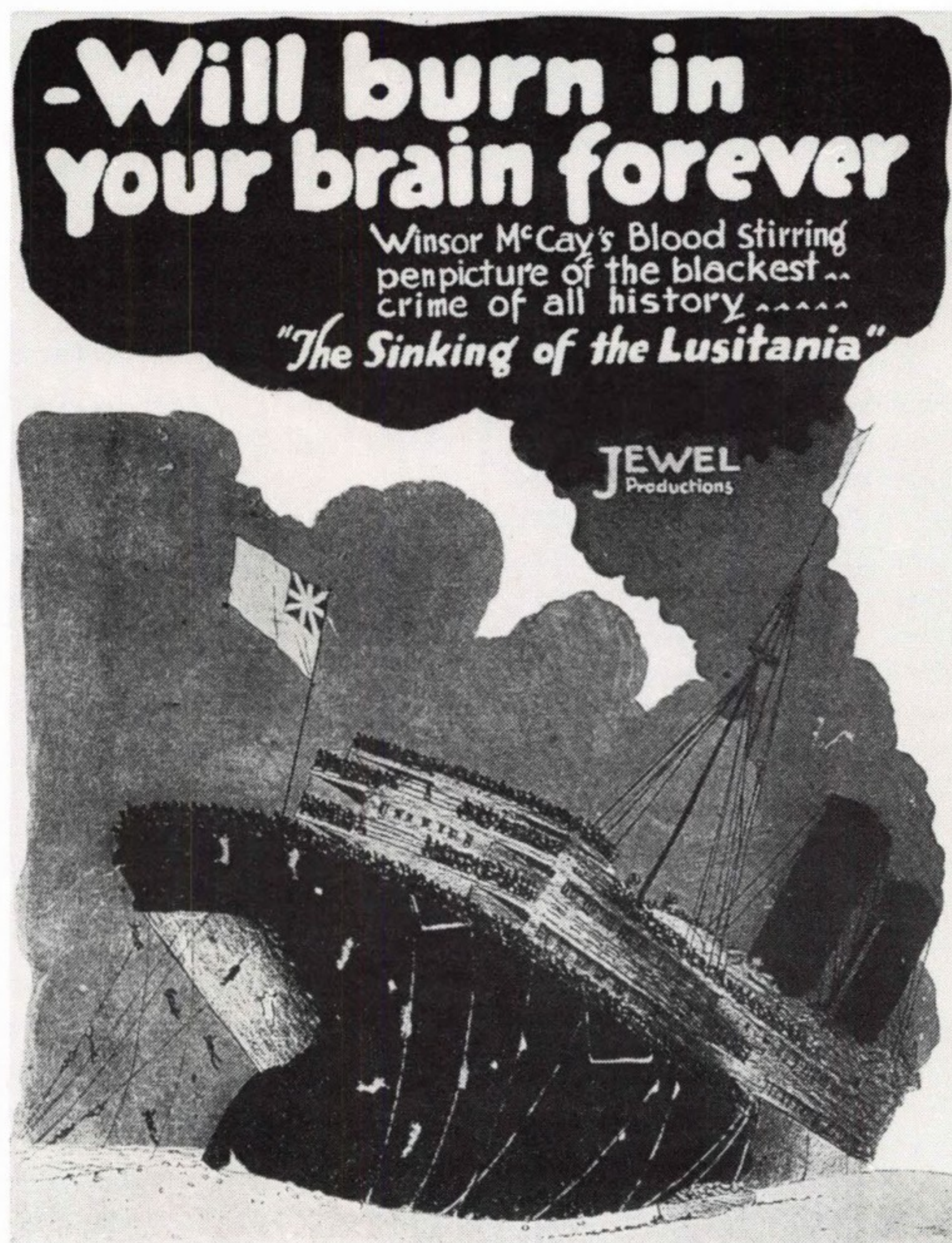
ASIA

By Erik Sulev

FLAMING BROTHERS

1987, *Vidi (VHS)*, *Star (LD)*, 95m

This Chow Yun Fat feature starts off well, falters throughout the middle, then drastically improves during the final half hour, delivering a delirious, carnage-filled finale. The clichéd plot concerns two brothers involved in illegal business, whose relationship falls apart when Tien (Chow) reforms to work with his lawful and religious wife in a convenience store. But when his



"The Sinking of the Lusitania," a unique experiment in documenting unfiled history with animation, is only one of the many gems featured on A TRIBUTE TO WINSOR McCAY.

brother Allan's wife is murdered and a friend's child is executed, Chow leaps back into the underworld, guns a'blazing! The image is non-letterboxed and slightly grainy; despite the poor quality of the subtitles, there are none at all on the superior-looking HK laserdisc pressing.

KILLER SNAKES

1972, *Something Weird Video*, \$23.00 ppd., 91m

Something Weird Video should be heartily congratulated for releasing this long lost '70s HK

exploitation feature in its "Shaw-Scope" (2.35:1) ratio. **KILLER SNAKES** weaves the bleak tale of Keto, a disturbed and pitiful young man who befriends an injured snake after healing it. Other wounded snakes soon slither to Keto for medical help (their gallbladders are being cut out by the locals for *aphrodisiacs*), and they repay him by indulging his S&M fantasies and avenging him against those who have harmed or shamed him in the past. Twenty years after it earned an "X" rating for its sadistic bondage scenes, **KILLER SNAKES** still oversteps

mainstream sensibilities with its slithery combination of sex and violence. Although the source print is quite scratchy, it actually adds to the seedy tone of the film. Let's hope that Something Weird Video can likewise find and release uncut prints of the Shaw Brothers' **BLACK MAGIC** series as well!

THE MASTER

1992, Long Shong, 90m

This bizarre "fish out of water" story stars Jet Li as "Jet," a kung-fu student who comes to Los Angeles to find his martial arts teacher (Yuen Wah, sympathetic for a change). Once he arrives, he discovers that his master has nearly been beaten to death by "Johnny," an American kung-fu superstar who wants to kill every other martial arts master until he is best in the world. Even if it fails on a logical level, **THE MASTER** succeeds as mindless entertainment, as director Tsui Hark throws as many diverse and ridiculous elements as possible into the midst of the bizarre comedy and brutal violence. The grand-slam finale is incredible as Jet and Johnny face off atop a skyscraper, and the lengthy shot of the loser "taking the plunge" will impress even the most jaded viewer. Not letterboxed, but subtitled, and much of the film is in English.

ONCE UPON A TIME IN CHINA 2


1992, Long Shong, 122m

This speedy follow-up to Tsui Hark's 1991 success—aka **WONG FEI HUNG 2**—again features Jet Li as Dr. Wong Fei Hung, the well-known Chinese folk hero. Twenty years after the events of the first film, Wong and Aunt Yee (Rosa-mund Kwan) travel to Canton to attend a medical convention. Yee's Western ways quickly at-

tract the unwanted attention of the murderous White Lotus Sect. Led by the mystical Kung, the sect's aim is to purge China of all foreign influences through violence and terror. Not surprisingly, Wong ends up on their enemy list and, with the help of Sun Yat-Sen, he vows to topple Kung and his sect. Despite Tsui's heavy reliance on wires and rapid editing, the kung-fu is excellent, and Li

proves that he is easily one of the best martial artists around, as the *long* fight sequences allow him to display his abilities to the fullest. Slightly letterboxed and squeezed to accommodate the 2.35:1 peripheral overflow, the subtitles remain fully visible. This time around, Wong's sidekick Fu (the film's source of comic relief) is played by Mok Siu Chung instead of Yuen Biao.

**FIRST HE CAUGHT ONE SNAKE...
THEN HUNDREDS MORE!...
THEN HE TRAINED THEM ALL TO KILL!**



SLIMY NIGHTMARES THAT MEAN DEATH TO THE LIVING
KILLER SNAKES

...THE HISS OF DEATH!

Starring **MAGGIE LEE · KURT LANG**
and **1001 KILLER SNAKES**
Produced by **RUN ME SHAW**
A **HOWARD MAHLER FILMS** RELEASE

IN COLOR · **X** NO ONE UNDER 17 ADMITTED

WARNING:
EXTREME FEAR OF SNAKES (ophidiophobia) can cause severe shock! IF YOU FEAR SNAKES, DO NOT ATTEMPT TO SEE THIS MOVIE. We CANNOT be Responsible for what might happen.

CANADA

By John Charles

THE BLACK TORMENT

1964, CIC Video, HF, OP, 85m 59s

This efficient British costume shocker stars Heather Sears (Hammer's **PHANTOM OF THE OPERA**) as the new bride of Sir Richard (John Turner), a nobleman whose previous wife committed suicide. A pair of murders and several ghostly sightings later, Sir Richard finds himself accused of the crimes and doubting his own sanity. It doesn't take great deductive powers to see where this one is going, but it's fun watching the stock characters and dusty clichés trotted out for one more run-through. The cast seems game and Turner gives a particularly robust performance that perfectly suits the melodramatic nature of the material. Unfortunately, CIC's transfer has major problems: some scenes are too bright, most are too dark. The first 2½m of this 1.85 feature are slightly matted, the rest is cropped to 1.33:1. The source print's color has faded and if there were ever any end credits, they're missing now. Directed by Robert Hartford-Davis (**CORRUPTION**). Formerly available in the US under the title **ESTATE OF INSANITY** (VCL).

CANNIBAL GIRLS

1972, CIC Video, HF, OP, 82m 44s

Ivan Reitman made his directorial debut with this lower-than-low budget Canadian horror/comedy. Future SCTV stars Andrea Martin and Eugene Levy (looking "separated at birth" from Gene Shalit) play two unwary travellers who run afoul of "The Reverend" (Ronald Mlodzik) and three female disciples, proprietors of

an unusual country restaurant. Despite some effective comic moments, this romp is too slow and fragmented, the result of a completely improvised script. Ironically, with its slow buildup and meager payoff, **CANNIBAL GIRLS** would be perfect fare for Count Floyd's SCTV "Monster Chiller Horror Theatre." (The main titles call this "A Scary Films Production.") Reitman does, however, make fine use of bleak, snow covered landscapes in establishing atmosphere, a natural asset ignored by most Canadian movies in their attempt to "look American." The print used here does not contain the "Warning Bell" gimmick added to the US version by AIP. Given the director and stars, it's surprising that Orion Home Video hasn't yet made this film available. Mlodzik earlier starred in David Cronenberg's 16mm experimental films **STEREO** (1969) and **CRIMES OF THE FUTURE** (1970). The opening credits are cropped but, other than a brief intrusion by a boom mike, the compositions translate well to video.

THE SCARECROW

1981, Pan-Canadian Video, OP, 87m 41s

This is a nice, low-key coming-of-age drama set in the small New Zealand town of Klynham during the late 1940s... so why mention it in a magazine devoted to fantastic video? Because a psychosexual rapist/killer is on the prowl in Klynham, preying on young girls! The killer is played by none other than John Carradine and, once this shock subsides, it's apparent that director Sam Pillsbury (**ZANDALEE**) made a very shrewd casting choice. With his gnarled arthritic hands, emaciated face, matted hair and mildewed suit, Carradine lends a disturbingly perverse feel to an otherwise subdued

film. One particularly creepy scene shows Carradine menacing the teenage heroine with a large (and blatantly phallic) knife while intoning, "Behold, my child, its length... see how its razor sharp edge would sink into your lush virginal body... far inside... far... far... FAR!" It's obvious that the actor appreciated this meaty role and he performs with a zeal absent from most of his later work. Although it was screened during the "Director's Fortnight" of the 1982 Cannes Film Festival, **THE SCARECROW** failed to secure significant distribution in North America; let's hope that it gets re-issued on video in the near future. This edition is a bit too murky and the video box inflates the running time to 108m (does anyone know if longer versions were released in foreign markets?). Pan-Canadian (the original incarnation of Cineplex-Odeon Video) retitled the film **KLYNHAM SUMMER** for its subsequent Pay-TV showings.

FRANCE

By Lucas Balbo

COMME UN LION

"Like a Lion"

Stemick Production, 79F

This sell-through release is one of numerous Turkish epics that joyfully mix Occidental and Oriental filmmaking styles. Released to French theaters as an American film (sic!), it is the story of a prince, abandoned in the jungle as an infant, who is raised by lions (thank you, Mr. Edgar Rice Burroughs!) and becomes the protector of innocent virgins and others who enter his wooded lair. Meanwhile at the castle, the dark usurper of his throne holds the countryside in a grip of terror. Happily, the prince—recognizable



Monica Swinn's performance in *BARBED WIRE DOLLS* was so good, large chunks of it were recycled in *JAILHOUSE WARDRESS*, now available in France as *FEMMES DE SS*!

from a regal tattoo on his shoulder—stages a homecoming to avenge his parents and sire many children. The battles and stunts are non-stop, with lots of graphic violence (hands crushed, faces disfigured, pregnant women being kicked, and countless rapes) and belly-dancing. Cüneyt Arkin (Anglicized here as “Steve” Arkin and on other films as “George”) appeared in numerous adventure, romance, and science fiction epics—about 5 per year—from the late '60s to the '80s! This film, apparently one of the “Kara Murat” series (which includes at least 5 others), is too violent to be a children's fairy tale, and too naïve for adults, but it's still a very catchy action film. Essential viewing for fans of “Naïve Cinema”... apparently a vast field still to be discovered from Turkey!

FEMMES DE SS

“SS Women”
1977, Videocine, Budget
Collection, 79F

Previously released by Sweet Home Video, this is Jess Franco's **JAILHOUSE WARDRESS** [*Un Paradis pour les Brutes, Un Enfer pour les Femmes*, “A Paradise for Brutes, A Hell for Women”]. In other words, it is the French version of the Erwin C. Dietrich production **BARBED WIRE DOLLS** [*Frauen-gefängnis*, “Caged Women,” 1975], which includes additional French sequences with Nadine Pascal and Ronald Weiss, plus footage culled from Eurociné's **HELLTRAIN** [*Train Spécial pour Hitler*, “Special Train for Hitler,” 1977]. Nothing too different here, only the video insert of the “new” title. This

version has almost nothing to do with the original Swiss-German production and much of its dark humor is ruined by numerous sex and torture inserts, probably not shot by Franco. The direction is credited to “Allan W. Steeve” (a Eurociné pseudonym sometimes used by Julio Perez Tabernero) on the front of the box, and to “Allen Richard” on the back! The only consolation is the presence of exuberant Pamela Stanford in the part of a lesbian prisoner.

OUTRE TOMBE

“Beyond the Grave”
1966, Casa Video, 79F

The box of this video credits this film's direction to Jess Franco, so I assumed it to be *Plaisir à Trois* (“Pleasure for Three”) which was filmed under this title, then

switched to **Les Inassouvies N°2** ("The Unsatisfied, Part 2"). Unfortunately, this is—once again—a French-dubbed version of William Grefé's Florida-made **Death Curse of Tartu** [VW2:16]!

ITALY

By Simone Romano

IL BUIO INTORNO A MONICA

"Darkness Around Monica"
1976, Avofilm, OP, 80m 28s

This dreadfully sleazy "psychological" (ie., nothing happens) thriller was helmed by Spanish cinematographer-turned-director Hans Burman. This Spanish-French co-production, originally titled **La muerte Ronda a Monica** ("Death Encircles Monica") stars Jean Sorel as the unfaithful husband of a wealthy woman (Monica, played by Nadiuska) and Karin Schubert as a lesbian jealous of Sorel. Someone plots a series of murders with the aim of driving Monica insane, in a wink at H.G. Clouzot's **DIABOLIQUE** [**Les Diaboliques**, 1955] that even includes a corpse in a filled bathtub! The film proceeds terribly slowly, until the "obvious" twist ending. One-time Franco regular Luis Barboo has a cameo bit as a gardener.

TERROR

1977, Cinéhollywood, OP,
85m 28s

Franco Prosperi (the co-director of the original **MONDO CANE** movies) directed this intense rape-and-retribution thriller, released theatrically in Italy as **La settima donna** ("The Seventh Woman"). Ray Lovelock and Matthieu Carrière star as two bank robbers who, with their partner, find shelter

in an isolated villa by the sea, where 5 college girls and their nun-teacher (Florinda Bolkan, who also played a nun in Gianfranco Mingozzi's **Flavia**) are spending the summer holidays. The threesome repeatedly beat, rape and humiliate the women, viciously killing their servant and a postman. When one of the girls is murdered, the others conspire to avenge her even more violently... The Cinéhollywood label disappeared a few years ago, but their releases can still be found for rent or sale in several Italian video stores.

I VIZI MORBOSI DI UNA GIOVANE INFERMIERA

"The Sick Perversions of a Young Nurse"
1973, Avofilm, Lit. 19,900, 91m 40s

This is Eloy de la Iglesias' **Una gota de sangre para morir amando** ("A Drop of Blood to Die Loving"; French title: **Le Bal du Vaudou** "Voodoo Dance"), an enjoyably obscure Hispano-French thriller, starring an aging Sue Lyon (Kubrick's **LOLITA**), Chris Mitchum, and Jean Sorel. Iglesias, also responsible for the excellent **IN A GLASS CAGE** [**El Techo de cristal**, 1970] and **CANNIBAL MAN** aka **APARTMENT ON THE 13TH FLOOR** [**La Semana del asesino**, 1971], pays more than just an *homage* to Stanley Kubrick, he openly rips-off the first half of **A CLOCKWORK ORANGE** in the first half of this film! Mitchum is the leader of a gang of "droogs," invading and thrashing houses, beating and raping both men and women. During a "suburban break-in" sequence, a huge TV screen is actually showing Kubrick's film! When Mitchum quits his gang, he meets Lyon, a sexually-disturbed nurse who makes love to and kills all of her handicapped or unhappy patients. He discovers her secret and blackmails her but, when his former

droogs beat him and leave him crippled, he becomes her patient, too! The best things about this film are the sets and costumes, an awkward blend of post-modernism and 1970s kitsch! This version is 4m shorter than the British video release, entitled **CLOCKWORK TERROR**.

Retitlings

BLOOD FOR BLOOD (Lettuce Entertain You) is John Trent's **SUNDAY IN THE COUNTRY** (1975), a Canada/UK co-production that stars Michael J. Pollard as the leader of a gang of criminals who terrorize (and are subsequently terrorized by) farmer Ernest Borgnine. Lettuce is out of business but new copies of films like **BLOOD FOR BLOOD** can be purchased in Canadian department stores for as little as \$9.95.

EBONY, IVORY AND JADE (VCI) is Cirio H. Santiago's **AMERICAN BEAUTY HOSTAGES** (1976), a silly action film starring Rosanne Katon and Colleen Camp. It's also out there as **FOXFORCE** (Wizard).

ICY DEATH (Lettuce Entertain You) is Al Adamson's actioner **DEATH DIMENSION** (1977) also available as **BLACKELIMINATOR** (Unicorn), **FREEZE BOMB** (Movietime) and **THE KILL FACTOR** (Academy)... and probably a bunch of other titles, but someone else is going to have to work that out!

MANIAC WARRIORS (AIP Video) is Lloyd A. Simandl's **EMPIRE OF ASH II** (c. 1989) a cheap Canadian ripoff of **THE ROAD WARRIOR** starring Melanie Kilgour.

There's also an **EMPIRE OF ASH III** (c. 1990) starring Kilgour and William Smith but as far as we can tell, there was never an **EMPIRE OF ASH I!** Both films debuted on Canadian Pay-TV.

MARK OF THE DEVIL, PART 3 (Fame Entertainment) is Juan Moctezuma's **ALUCARDA** (1975), also available as **SISTERS OF SATAN** (Academy Entertainment) and **INNOCENTS FROM HELL** (Show-care). The box carries the subtitle "Innocence [sic] from Hell" and promises "Stereo Hi-Fi, digitally remastered by Stuart Wall." Sounds like a crummy mono dub to us...

TOXIC SPAWN (Lettuce Entertain You) is **ALIEN CONTAMINATION** (1980), a gory but silly **ALIEN** ripoff originally released by Paragon Video. Directed by Luigi Cozzi using his familiar "Lewis Coates" pseudonym. As usual, the Lettuce box has its own ideas: the director is "L. Coates."

THUNDER MOUNTAIN (High Desert Films) is *another* retitling of Earl E. Smith's horror/western **WISHBONE CUTTER** (1977), already in circulation as **DIAMOND MOUNTAIN** (Mntex) and **THE SHADOW OF CHIKARA** (New World). It is reportedly also known as **THE BALLAD OF VIRGIL CANE!** (Did Al Adamson have a hand in this one?)

ULTIMATE DESIRES (Prism) is Lloyd A. Simandl's **BEYOND THE SILHOUETTE** (1991) a Canadian "erotic-thriller" starring Marc Singer, Tracy Scoggins and Brion James. It's available in Canada from Nova Home Video under the latter title.

WITNESS TO MURDER (Lettuce Entertain You) is Rafael Romero Merchant's **THE STUDENT CONNECTION** (1975), a Spanish/Italian thriller starring Ray Milland and Sylva Koscina. This PAL bootleg runs 82m in NTSC which is 10m shy of the running time listed in most reference books.

WOMEN WARRIORS (Lettuce Entertain You) is a dubbed, PAL

bootleg of **ISLAND WARRIORS** (1984) a wild Chinese fantasy/actioner about an island full of Amazons trying to curtail a male invasion. Direction is credited on the print to Au Yeung Chuen, though some sources say Chu Yen Ping. The soundtrack steals *huge* excerpts from **FIRST BLOOD** and **THE ROAD WARRIOR!**

—John Charles



ERRATA

- 9:3** Apparently, Nicolas Roeg's film of **THE WITCHES** does not end like Roald Dahl's book "everywhere else in the world." We're told that the British cassette also ends with the mouse hero reverted to human form.
- 11:9** After our review of **POISON** appeared, Fox Lorber Video decided to release Todd Haynes' film in three versions: 1) *NC-17*, the original director's cut; 2) *Unrated*, the same as the first version, minus frontal male nudity; and 3) *R-rated*, minus 2m of footage.
- 12:6** **HACK O'LANTERN** was that film's original title, not the retitling. **HALLOWEEN NIGHT** was Legacy Video's retitling.
- 13:9** John Charles' "Retitlings" description of **TWISTED** was missing a phrase. The first sentence should have read: "**TWISTED** (Direct) should not be confused with the 1985 thriller starring Christian Slater, *available through Hemdale. It's Gordon Hessler's MEDUSA* (1974), also available from Sinister Cinema."
- 13:17** **UNTIL THE END OF THE WORLD** was photographed in 1.85:1, not 2.35:1 as reported.
- 13:20** Obviously, **MIRAGE** was a 1989 release, not "1998" as misprinted.
- 13:45** **THE APPELGATES** was not a "direct-to video" release as reported, but played in theaters under the title **MEET THE APPELGATES**.

Thanks to Peter Avellino, John Charles, Gerald Houghton, Fred Olen Ray, Christopher P. Sheppard, Jason Spear, and Robert Walker.



The Underground Roots

By Stephen R. Bissette



I**N THE YEAR 1927-28**, after directing a small number of films in Switzerland, France, and the United States, Robert Florey interrupted his Hollywood career to direct a quartet of non-narrative, expressionistic shorts—most famously, **THE LIFE AND DEATH OF 9413—A HOLLYWOOD EXTRA**. Thirty years later, Curtis Harrington made the more difficult move from the American underground cinema to directing feature films in Hollywood. Like David Cronenberg and David Lynch after him, his preoccupation with dark fantasy inspired him to use the horror genre as a generic bridge to mainstream filmmaking.

As such, Harrington is one of the genre's true pioneers, a stature that has yet to be properly acknowledged. Whereas the underground and mainstream films of Cronenberg, Lynch, and even

John Waters are considered as equal vital components of their richly personal *oeuvres*, Harrington has not yet received such critical attention. No one has yet considered his experimental films as vital, organic and integral elements of his directorial vision and career.

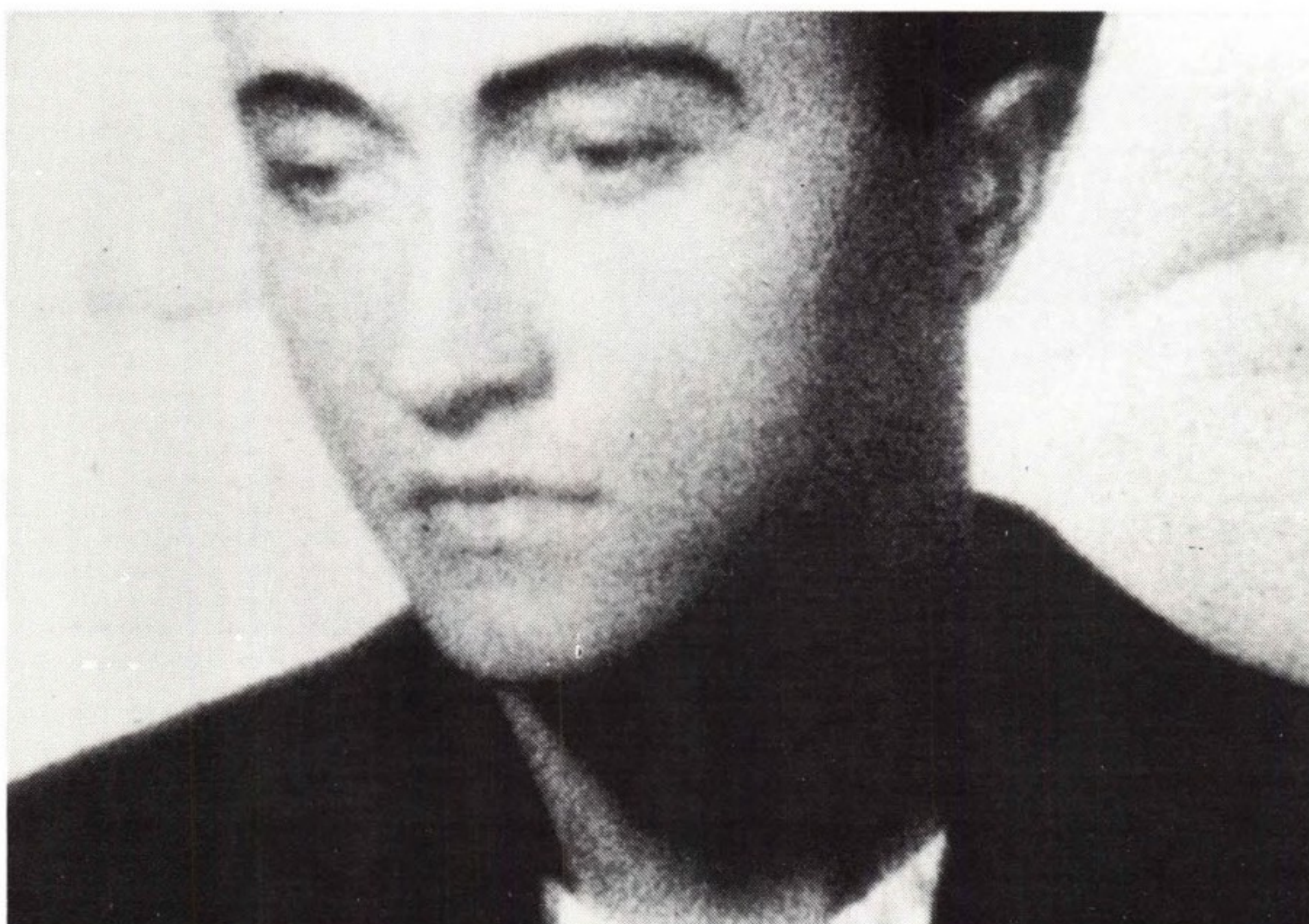
As noted in my earlier two-part overview of the *avant garde* underground horror film—published in *GOREZONE* #18 and #19 (1991)—genre scholars are forced to acknowledge Robert Wiene's **THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI** [*Das Kabinett des*

Above: PICNIC: In Harrington's lens, some cement steps and a common streetlamp combined to produce a shot of immense mythic power.

Opposite: Curtis Harrington (age 17) in his breakthrough 16mm short, FRAGMENT OF SEEKING.

Dr. Caligari, 1919] and Lynch's **ERASERHEAD** (1977) as two landmark crossovers between the schools of underground and mainstream horror. However, the half-century blind spot between these two classics remains sadly unilluminated, casting a shadow over the very period in which the young Harrington worked. Harrington is arguably the genre director whose deserved prominence remains most compromised by the unforgivable blind spot that refuses to mesh underground and mainstream cinema into a coherent weave. Though the context is different, Amos Vogel's statement that "the crucial importance of such filmmakers as

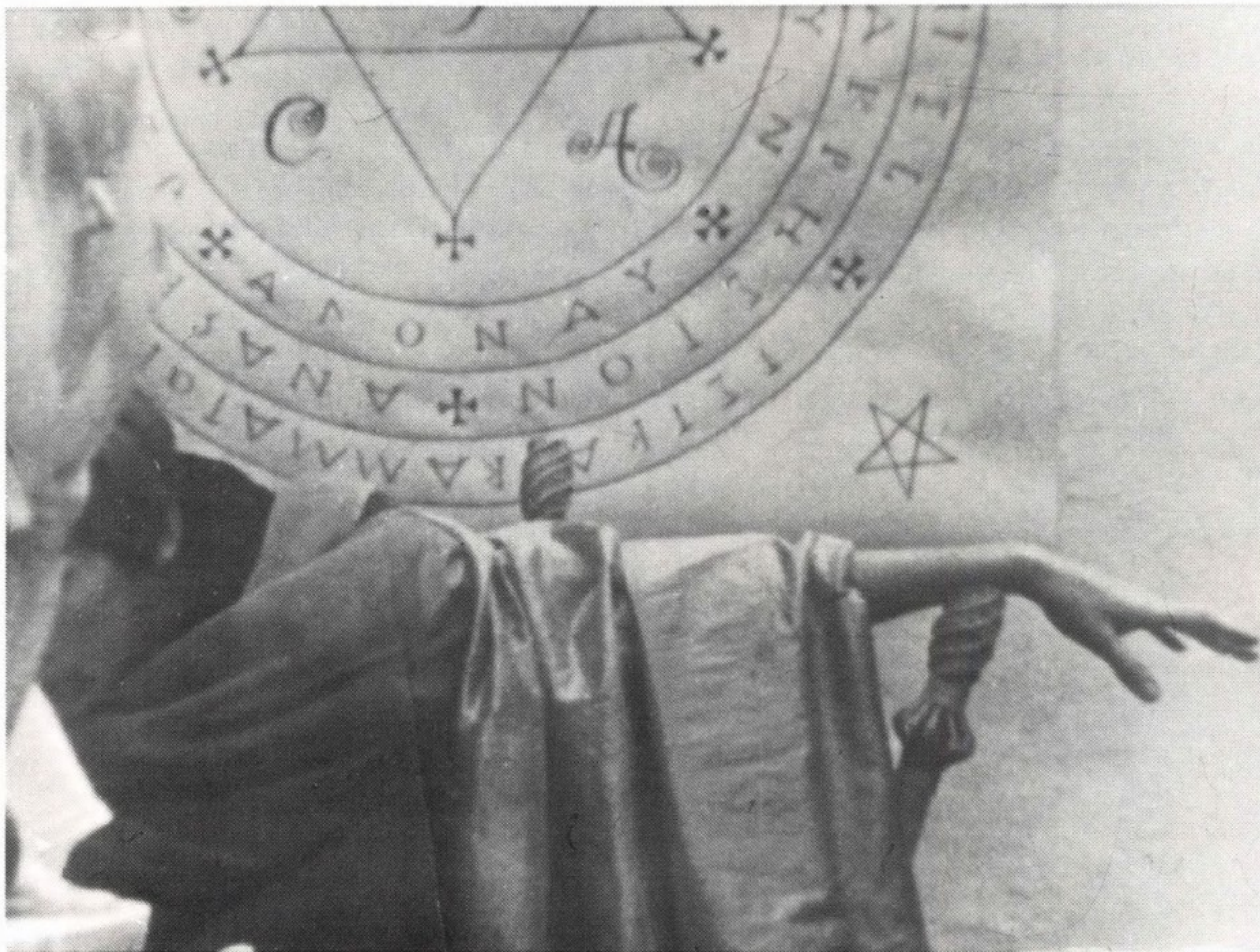
Harrington, Anger, and Markopoulos were a unique trinity in the history of *avant garde* cinema, their childhood fascination with Hollywood opulence and the medium of cinema blossomed into three distinctive, artistic voices. At the age of 14, Harrington made his first 8mm short film, **THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER** (1942), followed by two other 8mm efforts, **CRESCENDO** (1942) and **RENAISSANCE** (1944). Harrington later studied at the University of Southern California Film School, where he was one of its few experienced students, as film projects had yet to be made a standard part of the curriculum.



Sidney Peterson, the Whitney Brothers, Ralph Steiner, Oscar Fischinger, Watson-Webber, Maya Deren, Curtis Harrington, and James Broughton remain unknown or unanalyzed trivia in the ideological development of the new generation" is as true today as it was in the 1960s.¹

Harrington emerged from the West Coast experimental film renaissance which began with Maya Deren and Alexander Hammid's seminal **MESHES OF THE AFTERNOON** (1943)—properly revered by the underground, but still an unsung classic of the fantastic cinema—and continued for a little more than a decade. **MESHES OF THE AFTERNOON** had been shot in Los Angeles before Deren's move to New York City; it was in LA that Harrington, like his friends Kenneth Anger and Gregory Markopoulos, began to create stylized, personal 16mm works that were central to the experimental film renaissance.

If Harrington sounds prodigious, consider his similarly-gifted companions. Anger had appeared in Hollywood features since he was a baby (claiming Max Reinhardt and William Dieterle's delirious adaptation of Shakespeare's **A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM** [1935] among his childhood credits) and began making films at age 9, his ambitious early films including **PRISONER OF MARS** (1942, shot with miniatures) and **THE NEST** (1943), a tale of incest. Markopoulos shot his own 8mm films in Toledo, Ohio, starting at age 12 (including a version of Dickens' **THE CHRISTMAS CAROL**), enrolled at USC in 1945, and lived across the hall from Harrington, on whose **FRAGMENT OF SEEKING** (1946) he later worked as a camera assistant. As Sheldon Renan notes, "All three had made films as children. All three made works that were obviously very personal. All three made works that were almost confessions."



The work of artist Cameron, as seen in Harrington's final short film, *THE WORMWOOD STAR*.

Their dreamlike “confessions” were implicit and explicit expressions of male love and sexuality, both narcissistic and homoerotic; Harrington’s potentially manifested, fearful images of female sexuality and patriarchy marked thematic obsessions that would remain essential to his later mainstream narratives. Whereas Anger’s literally explosive **FIREWORKS** (1947, made while the director was still in high school) overtly embodied the homoerotic tensions in a sadomasochistic beating, evisceration, and implied rape—culminating in the image of a sailor’s penis as a sparkling roman candle—Harrington and Markopoulos favored less explicit expressions of their shared themes. If Anger embraced the “shock cinema” tactics of Buñuel and Dalí’s classic **AN ANDALUSIAN DOG** [*Un Chien Andalou*, 1930], Harrington and Markopoulos arguably applied the phantasmagoric vocabulary of Cocteau’s **THE BLOOD OF A POET** [*Le Sang d’un Poète*, 1930] to their cinema, crafting consciously mythic evocations of atmosphere and dread, which further linked their films with Deren’s *fantastique* poetics. Markopoulos was cinematically closer to Anger, proposing “a new narrative form through the fusion of the classic montage technique with a more abstract system... [that] involved the use of short film phrases which evoke thought-images,²” while Harrington chose a more accessible, linear approach to his dreamlike shorts.

Accurate descriptions of Harrington’s experimental films are difficult to find: I only have the memory of seeing **FRAGMENT OF SEEKING** and **ON THE EDGE** (1949) in the early 1970s to go on—indeed, the sketchy synopsis in some of the books and catalogs cited herein conflict with my memories of these films!—and have found precious little on those I have not seen.

Harrington’s first 16mm film was **FRAGMENT OF SEEKING** (originally entitled **SYMBOL OF DECADENCE**, 1946, approx. 15m), suggested by the myth of Narcissus. A youth (played by Harrington himself) urgently seeks the object of his own desire; the tension builds with his search, culminating in his embrace of a young woman who is subliminally revealed to be a female version of *himself*, before dissolving into a blonde-wigged, grinning skeleton. **PICNIC** (1948, 22m) was reportedly a satiric but nonetheless personal work, while **ON THE EDGE** (1949, 6m)—Harrington’s personal favorite of his early works—was an authentic Freudian nightmare in which a young man is mysteriously bound to an old woman by her knitting yarn, trying to move away from her but unable to sever the thread. **THE ASSIGNATION** (1952, released ’53, 8m), Harrington’s first color work, was a matured return to Edgar Allan Poe material, shot in Venice. **DANGEROUS HOUSES** (1952), filmed in London, was an overt return to the mythological realm, a reinterpretation of the tale of

As Cesare the
Somnambulist (with
Kenneth Anger) in
**THE INAUGURA-
TION OF THE
PLEASURE DOME.**



Odysseus (specifically his episode with Circe and subsequent trip to Hades); Harrington describes it as “the only so-called ‘experimental’ short that I made out of will rather than inspiration,” because he was attracted to the romantic, bombed-out, post-war ruins of St. John’s Wood. At 18-20m, **DANGEROUS HOUSES** is the longest of Harrington’s shorts, but was deemed “a lifeless artifact” by its maker and never distributed. **THE WORMWOOD STAR** (1956), also in color, focuses on the mystic paintings of Cameron [Parsons], later featured in **NIGHT TIDE** as “The Woman in Black,” who appears to sideshow mermaid Mora (Linda Lawson), seemingly beckoning her back to the sea.

What is striking, even from blurred memories and descriptions, are the shorts’ visual and thematic anticipations of Harrington’s later narrative works, with their *femme fatales*, smothering matriarchs, and alienated, androgynous protagonists. The wan male leads of **FRAGMENT OF SEEKING** and **ON THE EDGE** and their tormented psychodramas of narcissism, sexual identity and mother-fixation clearly delineate the tortured persona later portrayed by John Savage in **THE KILLING KIND** (1973). The links with genre works outside of Harrington’s own films are also apparent. The derivations from Hollywood and Germanic *femme fatale* archetypes seem obvious, and it is tempting to suggest **FRAGMENT OF SEEKING**’s subliminal shot of Harrington’s female

surrogate over skeletal remains as a prophetic inversion of the double-exposure of Norman and Mrs. Bates’ faces at the close of Hitchcock’s **PSYCHO**, 13 years later. More contemporary echoes can be found in David Lynch’s 30m short **THE GRANDMOTHER** (1973), anticipated in both tone and substance by **FRAGMENT OF SEEKING** and particularly **ON THE EDGE**.

Before his segue into narrative cinema—as an assistant producer to Jerry Wald at 20th Century Fox—Harrington played **CALIGARI**’s Cesare the Somnambulist in the second act (“The Banquet of Poisons”) of Kenneth Anger’s grandiose **INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME** (1956; revised as the “Sacred Mushroom Edition” in 1966, and again later). In white gaunt makeup and clad in black tights, his Cesare struts zombie-like through some of the film’s most impressive tableaux, wandering past a row of glittering candles and into a dark wall embellished with Egyptian cats, and on into a dream-like realm of silk and light (which, in the revised version, Anger embellishes with a superimposed sketch of Aleister Crowley’s face). In the sanctum within, Cesare pours an elixir for the gathered magical beings, and the film dissolves into a nonlinear and progressively denser and frenzied hallucinogenic experience. This fascinating, iconic conjugation of German expressionism, the West Coast American experimental film movement, and the horror genre

consummates one of the richest periods of American Cinema with a consciously alchemical intensity.

Harrington's works were erratically distributed at best, but they were seen. Maya Deren, ever the heart of the movement, co-founded the first of many filmmakers' co-operative networks in the 1940s, programming theatrical showings of their own works through New York's Provincetown Playhouse, Amos Vogel's "Cinema 16," and others. In 1957, Harrington's films found their first distributor in the Creative Film Society, founded by fellow West Coast filmmaker Robert Pike, when he was unable to find a distributor for his own work;³ most of them remained available from the CFS and Audio Brandon well into the '70s. The American underground cinema was introduced to Europe at the 1958 Brussels World's Fair, followed shortly thereafter by New American Cinema Group representative David Stone's presentation of 54 independent films at the 1961 Festival of Two Worlds in Spoleto, Italy. This retrospective included the works of Markopoulos and the debut of Harrington's just-completed first feature, **NIGHT TIDE**. Shortly thereafter, Markopoulos dissociated himself from the term "underground," even as vocal acolytes and advocates of the movement began to disassociate themselves from Harrington's **NIGHT TIDE**—despite its conspicuous similarities to Deren's **AT LAND** (1944)—and his subsequent works.

In *FILM CULTURE* #21 (1960), critic Parker Tyler's "Two Down and One to Go?" dismissed both Harrington's and Markopoulos' work, specifically reflecting the underground movement's disdain for Harrington's shift into independent theatrical narrative features. Jonas Mekas, the evangelical *VILLAGE VOICE* critic for underground cinema, passionately rose to Harrington's and Markopoulos' defense. In *FILM CULTURE*, Mekas cited **NIGHT TIDE** as one of the films "which, in one way or another... have contributed to the growth of the new cinema, and... should be mentioned in any survey of this kind."⁴ Through interviews conducted by Mekas, Markopoulos himself defended Harrington's work. "Sometimes, through sheer accident, I do come upon a very important commercial work," Markopoulos commented in Mekas' April 14, 1966 *VILLAGE VOICE* column. "I am thinking of Curtis Harrington's [**QUEEN**] **OF BLOOD**... It is excellent, and fascinating, that Curtis Harrington was able to put so much of his own work into the science [fiction] motion picture. There must have been rapport between the producer [George Edwards] and himself. And I do know from personal experience [**SERENITY**, 1955-60] how difficult this is."⁵

Harrington did indeed nurture his bond with producer George Edwards, and together they carved a unique niche in the postmodern Hollywood Gothic that thrived for a time in the '60s and '70s.

Today, Harrington's underground work is long out of circulation and nearly forgotten—the underground movement disowned him in the wake of his commercial features, just as the mainstream critics' vehement rejection of the underground had shorn Harrington from his own creative roots. Curtis Harrington remains a "man without a country," if you will, an important genre director who has rarely enjoyed the critical attention and acclaim he long ago earned.

The renewed availability of these shorts is essential to the recovery of Harrington's identity as a filmmaker, and his historic identity as an innovator. His mainstream work is too often unfairly dismissed as being derivative of **PSYCHO** (1960) and **WHATEVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?** (1962) rather than the vital culmination of his own formative, thematic obsessions which—as these 1940s experimental films prove—pre-dated their mainstream "archetypes" *by more than a decade*.

NOTES

- ¹ Amos Vogel, "Thirteen Confusion," originally printed in *EVERGREEN REVIEW*, reprinted in *THE NEW AMERICAN CINEMA: A CRITICAL ANTHOLOGY* edited by Gregory Battcock, E.P. Dutton & Co., Inc. 1967, pg. 128.
- ² Markopoulos quoted in "Introduction: A Reader's Guide to the American Avant-Garde Film" by P. Adams Sitney, *FILM CULTURE READER*, Praeger, 1970. pg. 8.
- ³ Stephen Dwoskin, *FILM IS: THE INTERNATIONAL FREE CINEMA*, The Overlook Press, 1975, pgs. 41, 55.
- ⁴ Mekas, *FILM CLTURE* #24, Spring, 1962; reprinted in *FILM CULTURE READER*, edited by P. Adams Sitney, Praeger, 1970, pg. 102.
- ⁵ Markopoulos interviewed by Jonas Mekas, reprinted in Mekas' *MOVIE JOURNAL: THE RISE OF THE NEW AMERICAN CINEMA, 1959-1971*, Collier Books, 1972, pg. 234.



Luana Anders



Night Tide, 1961



hen I was cast in **NIGHT TIDE**

I was a rebellious young Hollywood actress wanting to

be creative in what I felt was a climate of stifling conformity. Therefore I was thrilled to work with Curtis Harrington, a director of what we used to call "art" films—meaning those films that portrayed life's more elusive aspects. I remember Curtis as a young director who was diligent, imbued with a vision, and easy to work with.

In the years that followed, our friendship continued. I hung out with him and other friends and saw him at various social affairs. He is a warm, caring person, mellow and generous, with a sophisticated sense of humor.

*In the '70s, he hired me again for a part in **THE KILLING KIND**. I was no longer rebellious, nor as fretful about my work as I had been during **NIGHT TIDE**. And I got a kick out of glancing across the set between takes and seeing this urbane pal of mine, comfortably in charge of a full cast and crew, and just as adept at handling a costly mainstream movie as he had been as a young filmmaker directing super low-budget aesthetic films.*

—August 25, 1992

HORROR'S FIRST EXPERIMENTALIST



CURTIS HARRINGTON

Interview by Bill Kelley

Additional Material by Tim Lucas

I**MET CURTIS HARRINGTON** almost exactly 18 years ago. I was fresh out of college and had arrived in Los Angeles to live there for as long as fortune smiled on me. My first project was to conduct a group of interviews with directors whose work I had long admired: Don Siegel, William Friedkin, Sam Peckinpah, Brian DePalma. Into this unlikely, rough-hewn fraternity somehow fell Harrington, the director of dark, suspenseful delicacies like **NIGHT TIDE** (1961), **GAMES** (1967), and **WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?** (1972). He was, in fact, the first of the group whom I interviewed at length. I liked him immediately.

I wrote at the time that Harrington was the first member of the so-called “film school generation” to establish a directing career in Hollywood. Upon reflection, I think I was searching for an easy way to categorize him, and ultimately sold him short. The film school fellowship of directors actually arrived a generation or two later, and one of the most distinctive things about them was how few of them knew about anything *but* movies. In contrast, Harrington knew quite a lot about art. His house, as I discovered on our first meeting, tastefully reflects his passion for *art nouveau*; he has lived in and travelled about Europe, is fluent in at least one language besides English (French) and conversant in a couple of others.

Although Harrington's genre movies reflect the influences of the masters who preceded him—particularly Alfred Hitchcock and Josef von Sternberg—they are not imitative. Ironically, this may have hurt him as a commercial director; in the R-rated 1970s particularly, while his colleagues were busy imitating Hitchcock or rehashing Hammer, Harrington was concentrating on the old maxim of “a good story, well told.” The three movies he made during that decade—which should have stood out from the pack—were compromised by forces beyond their director's control: **WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?** (1971) had its juiciest elements truncated by its notoriously “hands-on” producer, Martin Ransohoff; **THE KILLING KIND** (1974), a disturbing portrait of domestic suburban insanity, was doomed by a repulsive ad campaign and amateurish distribution; and **RUBY**

(1977), Harrington's most profitable film to date, was grossly re-edited by hack producer Steve Krantz (the husband of pulp-sex novelist Judith Krantz).

Harrington's enthusiasm never dimmed. In the late '70s and into the '80s, when I was working as a TV reporter for a major South Florida newspaper, I would routinely see or phone Harrington during my frequent business trips to LA. Harrington's sense of humor afforded me a welcome break from the tedium of daily journalism, and he was so well-connected in Hollywood that he was a valuable “source” for my newspaper stories. During that period, he was directing primarily for television, including an episode of ABC-TV's horror anthology series **DARK-ROOM**, starring Billy Crystal as a young man who finds Lon Chaney Sr.'s makeup kit in a curio shop.

TV is, of course, a producer-driven medium. So, when Harrington revealed to me in 1987 that he was directing some installments of the **DYNASTY** spin-off **THE COLBYS**, he anticipated my bewilderment and interjected, “Right now, I'm practicing my craft, as opposed to my art.” As he approached his 60th birthday, Harrington—who, like his friend James Whale many years before, had invested his money wisely and was not dependent on TV work for survival—decided to quit squandering his energies on the grind of series television and focus them on trying to get a theatrical movie made.

Harrington's dream genre project is **CRANIUM**, a wildly visceral horror movie blending exploitable elements—sex, gore, a naïve young scientist who marries into a crazy European family—with the eye-popping art direction that Harrington has achieved so seemingly effortlessly since his first films. Harrington has recently been courted by producers Tamara Assayev and Joanna Lancaster, but no firm deals have yet resulted. Money to mount his pet projects remains a problem, although none of them falls beyond what Hollywood would consider a medium-budget picture.

CRANIUM ought to be made. Not just because Harrington deserves another shot at a major feature. Not just because, if cast and distributed properly, it would probably net a fortune for its distributor. But because audiences need to see a good, balls-against-the-wall, horror movie of the kind they don't make anymore, and Harrington is one of the few craftsmen left in Hollywood with the moxie to pull it off.

—B.K.

Opposite: On the set of MATA HARI in Budapest, Hungary.



Linda Lawson as Mora the Mermaid in NIGHT TIDE.

Has your reputation as a horror specialist limited your career options over the years?

I have always wanted to do films more in the Hitchcock tradition than actual horror. That was always an interest of mine, in trying to relate my preoccupations with atmosphere and the macabre to a viable commercial form. That's resulted in a certain amount of typecasting, but there has been no real detrimental effect. My career problem—the reason that I haven't made more films—is simply that, of all the films I've made, none has been a huge commercial success. That is the sole measure of one's worth in Hollywood.

NIGHT TIDE was your first theatrical feature. What was the genesis of that, and, particularly, how did you get involved with American International Pictures?

NIGHT TIDE was my original screenplay, based

on an unpublished short story of mine called "The Secrets of the Sea." I had raised the financing for it, about \$50,000 in cash. The total cost was between \$75,000 and \$80,000, but the actual cash outlay was only \$50,000. It was shot on a four-week schedule. The involvement wasn't directly with AIP. The distribution was with Filmgroup, which was Roger Corman's company at the time. Although he did not finance the picture, Roger helped me by using Filmgroup's distribution guarantees to get some money from what was then Pathé Laboratories. Pathé put up some money and a lab deferral. Roger later, of course, engaged me to write and direct QUEEN OF BLOOD.

Corman's name is not affixed to either of those films, though.

In the case of NIGHT TIDE, there would have been no reason. His name wasn't attached to QUEEN OF



Dennis Hopper had his first starring role—as a sailor disconcerted in love—in NIGHT TIDE.

BLOOD was because it was shot with a non-union crew; since Roger was a signator to the IATSE contract, he probably couldn't—on a technical basis—have his name associated with it. He's done quite a few things that way.

You weren't the total neophyte most of Corman's protégés were in the '60s.

No. I'd made all those experimental films, which had made a reputation of sorts for me. But it still didn't help me to get a feature made, till Roger came along.

Do you feel there was a Val Lewton influence on NIGHT TIDE?

Very much so, a very conscious influence. The plot structure of **NIGHT TIDE** is not dissimilar to **THE CAT PEOPLE**—the girl doomed by her heritage. I had admired particularly **THE CAT PEOPLE**, **I WALKED WITH A ZOMBIE** and **THE LEOPARD MAN** when I was younger.

There is also a mythic quality to NIGHT TIDE, a reworking of the Lorelei myth.

The underlying myth is kind of general, that the

Lorelei, or mermaids, lure seafaring men to their destruction. The Siren's call is very alluring; as the men respond to their song, their ship is dashed upon the rocks, and sinks. It's a portion of the legend of the fatal woman. You see this sort of approach in other films of mine, as well. **WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?** is based on "Hansel and Gretel," the Grimm fairy tale. There are also references to fairy tales in **GAMES**, you may remember. There's a brief throw-away moment just before Simone Signoret appears, all dressed in black—the prickling of the woman's finger on the thorn of the rose.

NIGHT TIDE seemed to disappear almost immediately. How did it do financially?

Very poorly. In its defense, I will say that it was given a particularly unfortunate release pattern, because Roger double-billed it with a very poor Soviet science fiction film called **BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN** (1963). It was terrible, badly dubbed, but it was in color, and it had a few special effects in it. In terms of the distribution pattern at that time, all **NIGHT TIDE** needed was to go out on a double-bill with, say, **THE RAVEN** (1963), which was also released at that



Florence Marly steals a scene (and a little blood) from co-star John Saxon in QUEEN OF BLOOD.

time. But since **BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN** didn't do any business, **NIGHT TIDE** obviously couldn't make any money either. For some reason—I remember being very aware of the statistics at the time—AIP paired **NIGHT TIDE** with **THE RAVEN** for its Boston release. Whether it reflects the added pull of **NIGHT TIDE** I don't know, but if you go back into the box office reports, **THE RAVEN** did better business in Boston than in any other engagement.

In 1964, **NIGHT TIDE** also played on its own, at New York's 55th Street Playhouse. In fact, I remember a line from the **NEW YORK TIMES** review at the time, which called it "a haunting try for something different."

Yes, that was Howard Thompson; he wrote glowingly of it. He and Dwight McDonald made a particular point of seeing **NIGHT TIDE** at some 42nd Street dive, and his review helped get it that booking. McDonald actually took Truman Capote to see it. Years later, Jennifer Jones gave a party for Capote in Los Angeles, before the publication of **IN COLD BLOOD**; I went only to escort a woman friend who asked me. When we were introduced to Jennifer

Jones, I heard that distinctive Truman Capote voice call out, "Harrington? It must be Curtis Harrington! I just *love* your films!" It was really extraordinary. Needless to say, I was momentarily speechless.

The continued following for **NIGHT TIDE** is gratifying. I know that Dennis Hopper, whenever there is a retrospective of his films, insists **NIGHT TIDE** be shown.

How did you get Hopper for the part?

I met him socially and he had expressed an admiration for some of my short experimental films. I also liked him as a young, up-and-coming actor, so I gave him the script. I was very pleased when he agreed to do it.

Was there any particular reason you used him in QUEEN OF BLOOD?

Casting him meant one less problem I'd have to deal with on a six-day schedule, and it was an easy way for a struggling young actor to make a little money for a couple of days' work. I might add that the couple in **GAMES** was originally modeled on Dennis and his wife at the time, Brooke Hayward.

QUEEN OF BLOOD was one of several Filmgroup movies that made use of footage from East European films, in this case a Soviet science fiction film called *Meshte Nastreshu* ("A Dream Comes True," 1963).

Yes. Roger called me up and said, "I have this Soviet science fiction film. Can you do something with it?" Had we just dubbed the Soviet film as is, it would have had no interest. So, in essence, Roger had me write a completely new plot structure, making use of whatever footage I could. All the special effects footage—the rocket, the landing on the planet Mars, people from another planet hurtling through outer space in a very strange space ship—came from that Soviet film. My story was totally different to the Soviet story, so my original footage amounted to something like 70% of the film.

Roger actually had bought two Soviet science fiction films at that time, and the other one—a film called **PLANET OF STORMS** [*Planeta Bur*, 1959]—I also wrote a new script around. It was mostly dubbed, but I added some new scenes—shot back-to-back with **QUEEN OF BLOOD**—featuring Faith Domergue and Basil Rathbone, who was also in **QUEEN OF BLOOD**. It was about communications with an orbiting space ship manned by a lady astronaut, and I think it was called **VOYAGE TO A PREHISTORIC PLANET**. I never really talked to Roger about this, so I don't know quite what happened, but he made still another version of it, that Peter Bogdanovich wrote and directed, **VOYAGE TO THE PLANET OF PREHISTORIC WOMEN** (1966), with Mamie Van Doren in the new footage.

QUEEN OF BLOOD belongs to that list of '50s and '60s SF movies that influenced ALIEN.

The similarities in **QUEEN OF BLOOD** are actually much stronger than those in the other films—the way the alien is found, the fact that it's a female, feeding off the crew, laying eggs in every hidden area throughout the ship... I once mentioned a whole list of similarities to Roger, and he smiled and said to me, "Curtis, if you ever get a lawsuit rolling, I'd be happy to make a statement on your behalf!" Of course, I'd have nothing to gain from such a procedure—he owns the picture! [LAUGHS]

What's your opinion of Corman?

I've always liked Roger. We're still friendly to this day, and we talk from time to time—although lately I've actually had more contact with his wife Julie. She'd love to produce **CRANIUM** or any one of a few other genre projects I've got in mind, but we know it'll never happen with Concorde Pictures, because of

their minuscule budgets and because Concorde doesn't use directors who are in the Director's Guild of America, as I am.

QUEEN OF BLOOD was your first film with producer George Edwards. Your alliance became one of the longest-lasting producer/director partnerships in recent Hollywood history. How did you meet?

In the early 1960s, I went to see an adaptation on Los Angeles of a Tennessee Williams two-act play, **THE GARDEN DISTRICT**. George was the producer—he was producing it at a little theater here in town, and quite successfully. I introduced myself to him, told him I admired the production, and we became friends. When Roger offered me **QUEEN OF BLOOD**, I knew I would need a line producer and thought of George.

Where was QUEEN OF BLOOD filmed?

That was filmed—you'll laugh when I tell you—at a place called Major Studios, a tiny little studio in downtown Los Angeles. I think it was once known, in the Silent era, as the Belasco Studio. They claimed at the time that Mary Pickford had done a silent picture there, and that it had one of those glass ceilings to let in light. After we shot there, Robert Aldrich bought it and it became the center of Robert Aldrich Productions. He shot **THE KILLING OF SISTER GEORGE** (1969) there.

We had a six-day schedule, and had Basil Rathbone for two days. I remember the budget being about \$50,000—Rathbone got \$3,000 per day for two days, \$6,000 total. He flew in from New York to do it. I can't tell you any specific anecdotes about working with him, other than to say that he was a great pro, and regaled me with stories about Hollywood in the few minutes here and there between set-ups or during meals. I remember thinking it was sad that this once-great star was reduced to "starring" in an American-International exploitation picture for \$6,000—although I was thrilled to be directing him. After shooting a few scenes for **VOYAGE TO A PREHISTORIC PLANET** with Faith Domergue—which we had tagged onto the end of the schedule—off he went, back to New York.

Were there any problems during the filming?

George and I wanted so much to impress Rathbone on his first day, but Roger had hired a bunch of hippies as set decorators, and they were stoned all the time, so the futuristic sets weren't ready. These people weren't untalented, they were just smoking pot every morning! We would say,



Harrington directs Simone Signoret on the set of his modern suspense classic, *GAMES*.

After *QUEEN OF BLOOD*, some critics who had liked your experimental films—and some experimental filmmakers, as well—began to reject you as a serious filmmaker. Do you now feel alienated from people like Kenneth Anger, or do you just try to concentrate on the positive reception to your work?

Well, I happen no longer to be friendly with Kenneth Anger, but that's a purely personal thing which has nothing to do with my or his work. I don't know how to comment about the criticism. I know what I'm doing, and know what I've been able to do. Critics either like my work or they don't. If they only like my experimental films, it doesn't particularly disturb me.

Of course, what both bodies of work share in common is an undercurrent of fantasy. Even the films you've made with essentially realistic settings exhibit an aura of suggested fantasy, employing unusual art direction and lighting. It has almost become your trademark.

I think the best way I can express it is by saying that I'm interested in the mythic, the deepest kind of unconscious Jungian aspects of the work that I do. If I see a story and I see the superficial, and then the underlying, mythic quality of it, that really excites me. I don't presume for a minute that the audience is going to sit around saying, "Oh, I saw the mythic quality in that." It's the kind of thing that hits them on an unconscious level.

Which of your films do you think works best in that fashion?

That's very difficult to answer. Probably my best realized film is **WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?**

How closely do you work with screenwriters?

As closely as I can. I wrote the original story of **GAMES** in collaboration with George Edwards. **WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?** was Henry Farrell's story, but many moments—ideas, concepts, and scenes—are mine. When I say this, I don't like to appear arrogant, but I do make quite a contribution on that level. For instance, in **GAMES**, even to the point of telling the writer to write a concept. One of the reasons that I don't particularly like to write is that I'm not a very good writer of dialogue. That's a very special talent. I write very functional dialogue, but I haven't the ability to transmute it into that marvelous kind of conversational dialogue that, at the same time, conveys in a very artful way the information and everything.

"Hey, let's go, we've got a schedule here, we start shooting tomorrow," and they'd say, "Hey, man, don't worry, it'll be cool."

One of the things they screwed up was the silver paper that covered the panels and some of the columns in the set where Rathbone appeared. When you hang wallpaper, you put the paste on the paper, not on the wall. Well, they put the paste on the wall, then tried to smear the paper on it, and it left bubbles. If you look closely, there are a couple of scenes where I dolly along with Rathbone, and you can see bubbles in those shiny silver columns! [LAUGHS] It's really embarrassing.

I had also envisioned a camera movement where I could pull up and back from Rathbone standing on the set and you would see this glistening black floor. The set dressers found a big roll of shiny plastic floor covering but, by the time we were ready to shoot, the plastic was filthy, all covered with dust and dirt from people walking all over the studio. So that was the end of that shot. An old-timer on the crew later told me that those shiny black floors in the musicals of the '30s and '40s—which is what we all remember the effect from—were achieved by means of a special black paint.

So it was *that* sort of thing, making **QUEEN OF BLOOD**.



A masked James Caan and Katharine Ross stage a macabre performance in *GAMES*.

How strong a role do you play in shaping the visual decor which plays such a vital role in your films?

I'm totally involved in it. I try to get a set designer and a decorator who are very talented and who can "read" me without my having to rush out and personally pick every ashtray and every lamp and every rug and tell the architect where to put the doors. Except for that, I am very involved.

I once did a "Movie of the Week" called **KILLER BEES**. I was stuck, against my will, with an exceedingly poor set decorator, so poor that at a certain point I fired him and did it all myself. I literally had to do all the set decorating myself, which was terrifying, but I can't shoot something unless it's right. So I said, "All right, let the crew sit down." I took the lead man—the decorator who moves all the furniture and everything—and I took an hour off on a certain location, and I did the whole set. I said, "Put that picture there, put that desk there, move that here, get rid of that," until I had everything the way I wanted it. Then we shot the scene.

What is the scope of your artistic control in your theatrical films?

The area where I have had problems is at the cutting stage of the film. Producers and executives sometimes become involved in a very negative way in hurting a director's work. I had a good experience with **GAMES**, because when I showed it to the executives at Universal, Lew Wasserman—who was the head of the studio—simply asked me to make the film 10m shorter. Since he did not specify what he wanted cut—he just said, "It's too long, make it shorter"—I found that kind of comment not harmful at all. There's no problem as long as I am allowed to make the cut. Under those conditions, there's no reason why I can't make any work of mine shorter, and probably improve it in the process. So that was a completely felicitous experience; **GAMES** is completely my film.

But on **WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?**, Martin Ransohoff—who's notorious in the film industry for meddling with directors' work—Roman Polanski had a very unfortunate experience with

him on **THE FEARLESS VAMPIRE KILLERS**—Ransohoff made cuts and changes of which I don't approve at all. These were done behind my back and were very upsetting to me. I still don't consider the damage major, but I really feel the film would have been better without the cuts.

For instance—and this is a minor thing that no producer should interfere with, in my opinion—I create certain transitions in sequences, for the use of dissolves. I like dissolves, particularly time dissolves and slow dissolves, such as George Stevens and Josef von Sternberg used. I had two of these very specifically worked out in **HELEN**, and Ransohoff blithely announced one day that he didn't like dissolves. And that was it. And even though I begged him, the release version of the film contains no dissolves, just straight cuts. That is an extremely arbitrary thing for a producer to do, to rob a director's style in that way, simply because he doesn't like dissolves.

Is there a stipulation in your contract delineating the amount of power you have over your films?

No, I'm not in that position. The only thing that means anything is final cut, which very few directors are granted, and the only way you can get in that position is to have made a series of one or two enormous boxoffice hits. Otherwise, your only hope of protection is to work for producers who have some taste and sensibility.

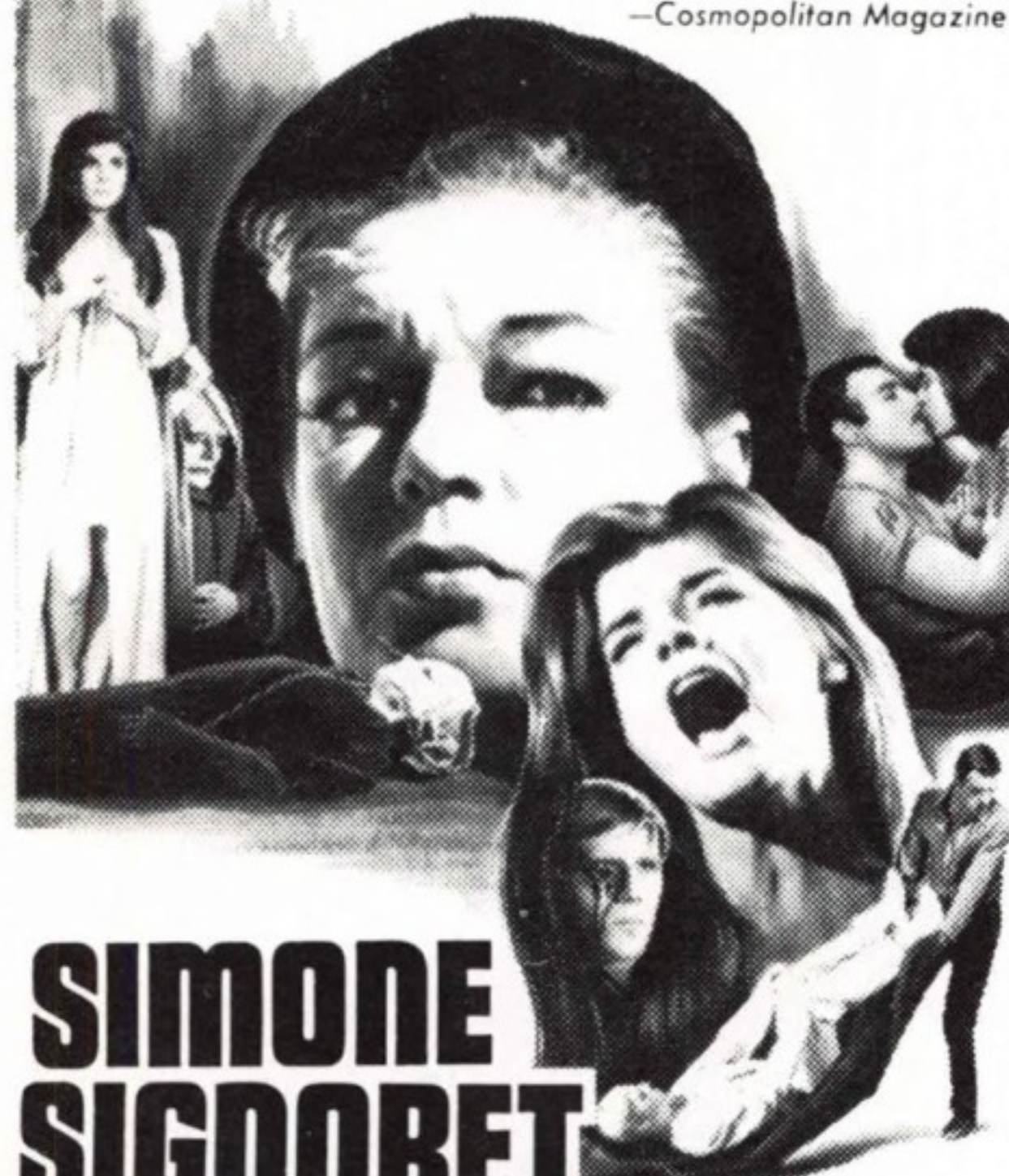
Where have you had better experiences as a director—in independent productions or working with the majors?

The irony is that I made **GAMES** for a major and had no real problem, but I made **HELEN** for Filmways—an independent company, which should be a better situation—and it was cut. So, ultimately, it comes back to the kind of individuals you're working with. On **WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?**, the producer, James Nicholson, only insisted on one cut that I didn't like. The cut sequence is even hard for me to describe. There's a scene with Shelley Winters and Michael Gothard that ends rather abruptly. It's not the ending that I shot for the scene. Nicholson had gotten it into his head that, if we ended it that way, it would leave an element of funny suspense that wasn't really written into it or directed into it. And so it was cut that way.

Another aspect of this subject is the MPAA rating system, which I certainly don't like, because in a way it has brought about a new kind of censorship. For instance, in **HELEN**, some of the damaging cuts were

"GAMES" IS "THE GASPER-GETTER OF THE YEAR! A SLEEK, SHEER, MACABRE THRILLER WHICH COMPARES FAVORABLY TO 'PSYCHO'!"

—Cosmopolitan Magazine



CO-STARRING
JAMES CAAN
KATHARINE ROSS
IN
"GAMES"

TECHNICOLOR

DON STROUD Music: SAMUEL MATLOVSKY Screenplay by GENE KEARNEY
Based on an original story by CURTIS HARRINGTON and GEORGE EDWARDS
Directed by CURTIS HARRINGTON • Produced by GEORGE EDWARDS • A UNIVERSAL PICTURE

MCA Universal Home Video—release this!

made to get the film a GP rating. Ransohoff suddenly decided—again, arbitrarily—that he wanted the film to appeal to a wider audience. In striving for the GP rating, a lot of the shock and violence had to be cut out. I felt that was very damaging, it left the film lukewarm. The final murder sequence was more like the shower sequence in **PSYCHO**, but it was cut way, way down. When it appeared on television, it was cut out in its totality. There wasn't a frame of it left.

One criticism that's been offered of your body of work is that, in many respects, it's a victory of style over content.

Well, as you can probably tell from my work, I'm very aesthetically-oriented. I'm very concerned with abstract visuals and rhythm and the form of filmmaking, as a means of creating emotion, much more than the content. In the case of **GAMES**, you can probably see that the story was conceived to make use of all the visual elements.

It's a moot criticism anyway, because your films haven't failed because of their style, but because of post-production interference and faulty distribution.

No one's work has been more harmed by poor distribution than mine, in my opinion. I have been hurt most by the distribution of **WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?**, which could have been much more commercially successful had the distributor given it some kind of push, or even a suitable advertising campaign. United Artists had very little investment in the film; it was mostly financed by NBC and Filmways, so they were in a better position to make money off of it by spending a minimal amount on it. **HELEN** played a fast week and then it was gone, so there was never any chance for word of mouth to build. The advertising campaign couldn't have been better designed to keep people away! It was absolutely asinine. The promotional campaign—such as it was—for **THE KILLING KIND** was even worse. It was thoroughly repulsive, a picture of a rat dangling in front of

somebody's face. No intelligent person would go to see a film advertised in that way. These, unfortunately, are areas over which I had no control.

That sort of control generally accompanies the right to final cut.

Which, once again, is only granted after a previous financial success. I'm in an equivocal position because I have not made a huge blockbuster. Until a director has made a blockbuster, he's just a bum. I have probably better reviews than many directors who work all the time, but that means nothing to the average Hollywood mogul. The only thing they're interested in is profit and loss statements at the box office.

You mentioned that the couple in GAMES are patterned after Dennis Hopper and Brooke Hayward. Did you ever think of casting Hopper in the film?

No, Dennis wouldn't have had the weight for the role, not at that time.

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN (Shelley Winters)? She's uneasy in the presence of sinister voice-teacher Hamilton Starr (Michael MacLiammoir).



Bof-13

Was James Caan suggested by Universal?

Not at all. They didn't want him! He had done **LADY IN A CAGE** and two films for Howard Hawks, **RED LINE 7000** and **EL DORADO**—all those were Paramount Pictures—and I thought he had the right quality for **GAMES**, but Universal wanted one of their contract players. I had to fight to get him.

Jimmy and I got along fine, but he's very truculent. We had our minor battles, but nothing serious. I do remember he threatened to punch out George Edwards once. But he didn't do anything like that with me—you don't punch out your director, not if you want those close-ups! I like Jimmy, although our paths don't really cross. He's still got it—his performance in **MISERY** is first-rate. That's a tough performance to give, because you're essentially *reacting*, not acting in the conventional sense.

I understand that, while you were working at Universal, you became involved in the restoration of James Whale's *THE OLD DARK HOUSE* (1932).

That was while George Edwards and I were devising the storyline to **GAMES** at Universal in 1967. I became friendly with the head of the editorial department at Universal and, after a period of time, I mentioned that I'd like to track down the studio's print of **THE OLD DARK HOUSE**.

The reason Universal didn't have ready access to it—as they did with their other classic horror films of the '30s and '40s—was because the rights had reverted back to the J.B. Priestley estate. It's based on his novel, **BENIGHTED**. Then Columbia had acquired the rights for a remake by William Castle in the early '60s. Universal couldn't market the film, release it to TV or anything, because Columbia had the rights. So, with no commercial interest in it, they let it languish in a vault. It existed in the form of a nitrate negative, and a lavender protection print—both of which were on the East Coast. The negative had begun to deteriorate, particularly the first reel.

I got in touch with the American Film Institute in Washington DC, the Museum of Modern Art in New York City, and the Eastman House in Rochester NY. The first person I heard back from was James Card at the Eastman House—who replied by telegram, saying, "We're so thrilled, we'll assume all costs for the restoration." Then it took weeks to get the Columbia Pictures legal department off their asses. Universal and Eastman House could only perform the restoration if there was no commercial motive behind it. We had to assure Columbia that there was not, that we simply wanted to save the film before it disintegrated. Anyway, we ultimately saved it. Be-

cause of the deterioration of the first reel, we had to make that part of the dupe negative from a positive print, so the quality is not as clear as in the rest of the film, but at least we saved it.

Afterward, I had the great satisfaction of telling Boris Karloff that we had saved **THE OLD DARK HOUSE**.

How did you happen to meet him?

I was still at Universal, and Karloff was doing a guest appearance in an episode of **THE NAME OF THE GAME** that I learned about. So I arranged to meet him, and told him about **THE OLD DARK HOUSE**. He was thrilled. He loved the film.

I'm amazed that Universal never bothered to get the rights back from Columbia, so the film could officially be added to their catalog of horror classics.

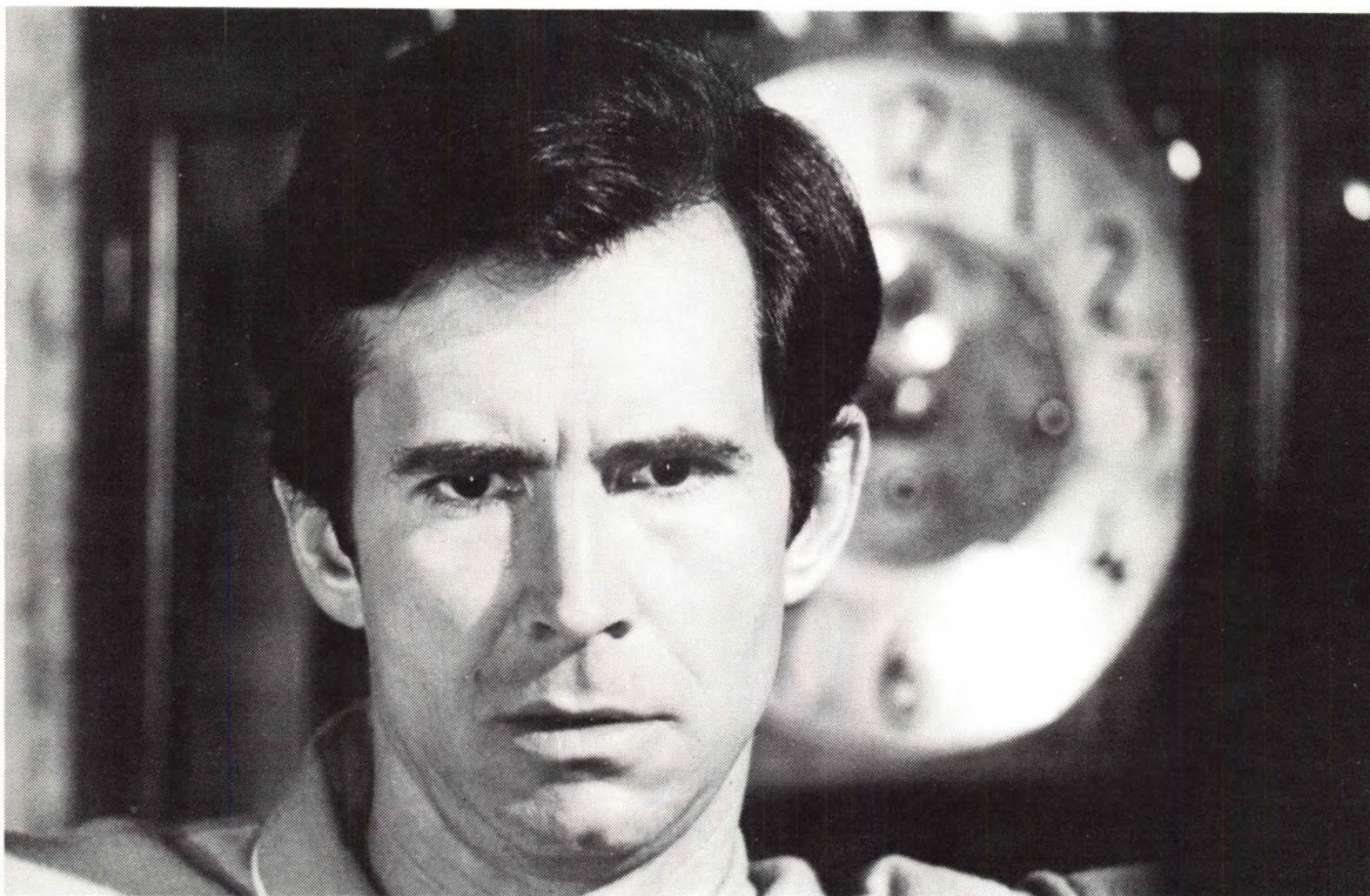
Listen, you don't need to tell me! I've been trying to get Universal to release **GAMES** on home video for years, and that's a *color* movie with at least *one* major star: *James Caan*. And they've got a gorgeous tape transfer of the film already made; it's been shown on American Movie Classics and it looks great. **GAMES** has a big following, too. It's a title that most movie buffs seem to know, so you'd think it would have some marketability.

You've directed a number of Made-for-TV movies. Is it very different from directing feature films?

The basic difference is that when a feature film is made, if more money needs to be spent to improve it, there is a certain psychological justification. If we make it better, then it may be more successful; more people will see it and more money will come in. But there is no reason to extend the schedule or spend any more money on a TV film, because there is a set amount of money that it brings in. Of course, it might get a higher rating, but unless that is immediately transferred into terms of dollars, it doesn't really mean anything. Making a TV film, I cannot justify saying, "Well, if I had an extra day, I could make it so much better." They just look at you and say, "Who cares whether you make it better or not?" So that really is the major limitation. It's back-breaking work to bring a film off well under such restrictions. In a way, I accept the TV restrictions as a challenge, but it *is* a little too much at times.

HOW AWFUL ABOUT ALLAN was your first TV movie.

It's okay, but I'm not crazy about it. There wasn't much to the script. I was very nervous before



The late, great Anthony Perkins in Harrington's first Made-for-TV movie, *HOW AWFUL ABOUT ALLAN*.

starting it, because I knew the schedule would be murder, and Tony Perkins was coming to it straight from **CATCH-22** (1970), and he'd never done a Made-for-TV movie. Tony and I were walking around the old RKO lot before shooting began, and I told him my concerns, and he said, "Curtis, don't worry about a thing." Sure enough, he was there promptly every day, knew all his lines, never created a problem. I was very grateful to him. Julie Harris was wonderful, too, and she and I are good friends to this day.

After *ALLAN*, you returned to theatrical features with *WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?* It's something of an anomaly in your career; a sort of hybrid Gothic horror co-written by a Hammer screenwriter (Jimmy Sangster), and also a brief return to AIP.

That came about because I was the original director of AIP's ill-fated remake of **WUTHERING HEIGHTS**, in the early 1970s. I'd hired a screenwriter—Mead Roberts—because he'd adapted a William Inge play into **THE STRIPPER** back when I worked at 20th Century-Fox. Mead went off to England, travelling the moors, visiting the Brontes' house, supposedly soaking up atmosphere. But he'd really gone off the deep end. I was here in LA, with the

deadline for script delivery rapidly approaching, and I hadn't received any pages. Mead kept saying, "Oh, my secretary hasn't finished typing it yet—but it's wonderful!" When he finally turned it in, the script was sheer drivel. AIP put another writer [Patrick Tilley] on **WUTHERING HEIGHTS** very quickly. Robert Fuest directed it—badly—and there were shortcomings in the casting; Anna Calder Marshall was dreadful and Timothy Dalton hadn't yet matured into the actor he is today, so it was a mess.

After that, AIP owed me a film. Knowing this, Shelley Winters—who had worked with me on **WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?**—recommended me for **AUNTIE ROO**.

It's a horrible title.

It was originally called **THE GINGERBREAD HOUSE**, but there was a Broadway play called **THE GINGERBREAD MAN** that was expected to be made into a movie, so AIP changed it to **WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?**, in the style of suspense/horror films of that period. I said, "For heaven's sake, at least soften the thing, and call it **WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?**" and that's in fact the way it appears on the credits. But the promotional machinery was already in motion by the time I suggested that title change, so in all the ads, it's **WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?**



*Shelley Winters prepares to replace her dead daughter with a live one in **WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?***

You once told me you had some trouble with the logistics of shooting.

I had a very poor cinematographer, Desmond Dickinson, who had once done some great things—Olivier's **HAMLET** among them—but by then, he was just going through the motions. He tended to overlight everything, and I was constantly having to tell him to darken the set. And I had a great deal of difficulty with Michael Gothard, who was forced on me by AIP, who had signed him to a contract.

He had just done **SCREAM AND SCREAM AGAIN** for them.

That's right. He was just a lousy actor, and very nervous. If you didn't get a scene with him by the third take, he became more nervous and then anything you shot was unusable.

In **AUNTIE ROO**, there's a similarity to **NIGHT OF THE HUNTER** in that the children hide the loot they steal from Roo in a teddy bear.

Well, I certainly admire **NIGHT OF THE HUNTER**, but it wasn't done as an *hommage* to that film. It was in our script. The similarity didn't occur to me at the time.

Let's move on to **THE KILLING KIND**, which I think is one of your best pictures.

It's interesting; Charles Higham feels the same way.

You don't agree?

Well, let me just say that I'm proud of it. Ann Sothern is very proud of it also. There was a tribute to Ann Sothern about four years ago at the Santa Barbara Film Festival, and she asked very pointedly that they include that film, among others. It was very, very well-received by that audience in Santa Barbara, which was heartening because, as you know, the film had virtually no release in this country.

You once described **THE KILLING KIND** to me as your most "neglected" film.

Because it's had such a dismal history, in terms of distribution. The film was financed independently by a couple of fellows from Texas, who had no previous experience in the motion picture business. It was made under the aegis of a company in Hollywood, which no longer exists, that was run by a man named Epstein. The company had been very successful making commercials and had a distribution arm that distributed their commercials. These naïve and inexperienced investors got some kind of guarantee from this Epstein fellow, who fancied that he wanted to get into film distribution. There was no way, after that, to arrange its distribution with a real distributor. It was like giving the film to my *grandmother* to distribute. It played a few drive-in dates in the South and that was the end of it.

How did you come to undertake the project in the first place?

It was developed as a script by George Edwards, who was also the one who got these guys interested in financing it. Then George asked me to direct it. I made some modifications on the script—I can't remember what they were.

I would imagine that they had to do with the details of the relationships between the killer and his overbearing mother, (John Savage and Ann Sothern) and the neighboring spinster and her father, played by Luana Anders and Peter Brocco.

That's true; all of that was mine.

George and I together discovered John Savage, who at that point had done only one or two other pictures.¹ We saw just about every young actor in town for that part, and John's reading was infinitely superior to the rest. It was rather like when I saw the



Ann Sothorn cuddles unbalanced son John Savage in THE KILLING KIND.

reading of Diane Varsi [for the role of Allison Mackenzie] for the original **PEYTON PLACE**. We became absolutely thrilled, and I think he was perfect in the part.

His performance really does walk the line, in that we never completely lose sympathy for him, even though...

Even though he's been a naughty boy! [LAUGHS] I was also lucky to get Cindy Williams, who had just made her first important film with George Cukor: **TRAVELS WITH MY AUNT** (1972).

As well-crafted as it is—by all involved—THE KILLING KIND is also one of your darkest films. It doesn't seem a logical choice for commercial success.

I think the financiers thought it would make money because it was shot on a very low budget. I'm sure they also thought that the sensationalistic aspects and violence were saleable. But I think they overlooked the fact that it was a domestic tragedy.

THE **KILLING KIND** was the first of your films to take full advantage of the freedoms made possible by the MPAA ratings system—at the time, a liberating rather than a restricting force in filmmaking. It's unusually explicit, in terms of violence and nudity, for one of your films.

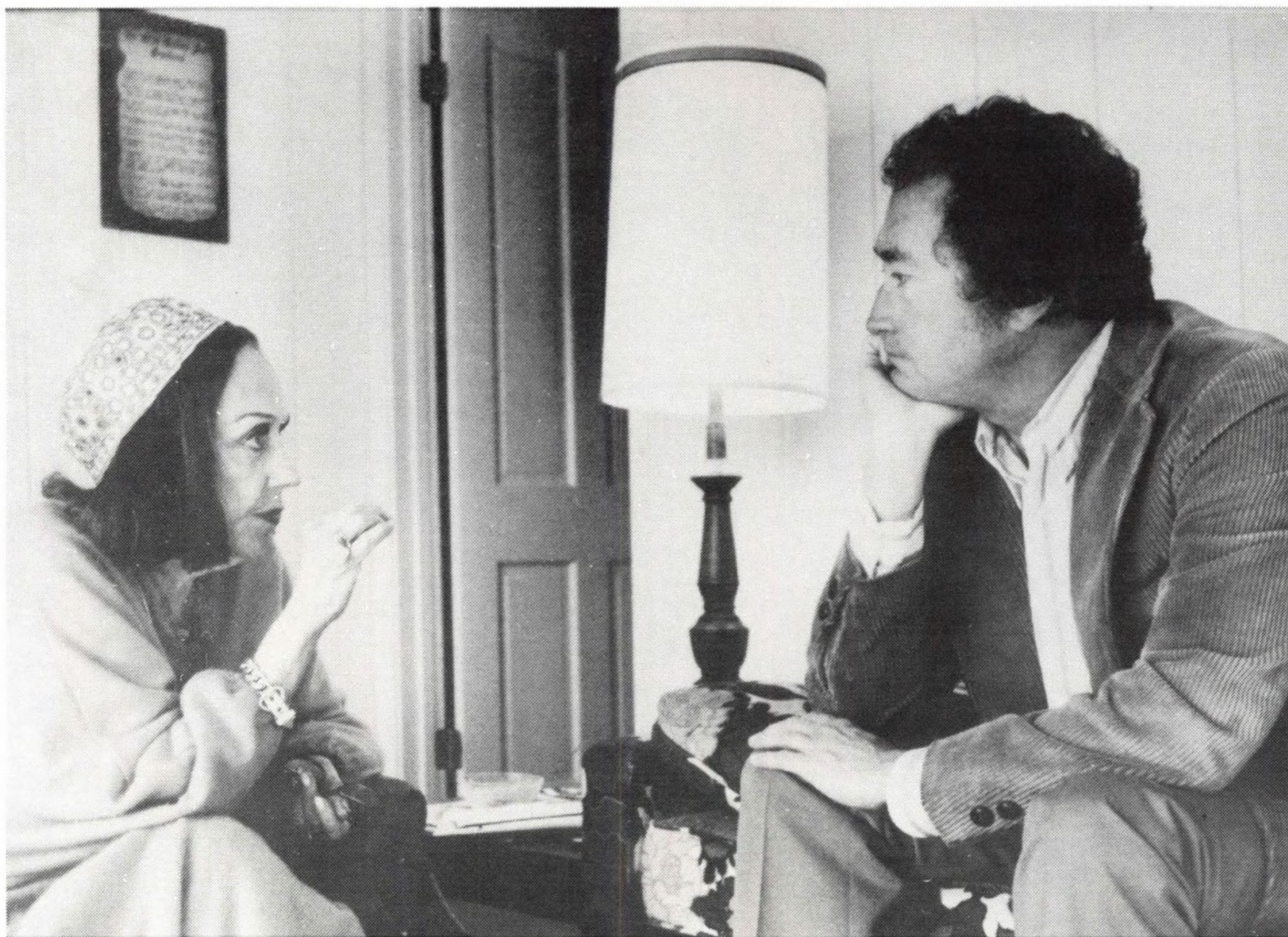
That's so, but only because the subject matter required it.

Did this require an adjustment of any kind, on your part?

Oh, no! I've always wanted to go *all the way*! [LAUGHS] I'm not shy about that, and I don't share the American perspective of finding sex more objectionable than violence on the screen. I don't approve of gratuitous violence. A film like **LETHAL WEAPON 3** is appalling to me. And that's the hot stuff these days.

How was Ann Sothorn to work with?

Ann and I had some conflicts. We ended up being very good friends, and we still are, but she can be



*Conversing with Miss Swanson during the filming of **KILLER BEES**.*

rather difficult. I think it's the usual matter of an actor's ego. I think she realized that John Savage was giving an excellent performance and felt a little jealous. I was disappointed, because John was a young actor who needed a lot of TLC [tender loving care], and she didn't give it to him. She set herself up in conflict with him. Other than a few specific incidents of this, she was fine.

How much was casting imposed on your films by outside forces—I'm thinking particularly of the Made-for-TV movies you directed.

They exert essentially the same kind of control a movie studio executive does. Most of the time, I've been able to keep it from being too disastrous. In **THE CAT CREATURE**, when ABC wanted Patty Duke, I was stunned. Patty Duke is an Oscar-winner and all, but for **THE CAT CREATURE**? As a beautiful young woman? She'd had a big hit on the network the previous month, and all they see is the ratings and the "Q" rankings, and that's who they wanted. Of their list of approved actresses, I managed to get them to agree to Meredith Baxter, who was at least pretty.

In the case of **THE CAT CREATURE**, the producer and I talked about resurrecting as many actors as possible who had appeared in the horror films of the '30s and '40s. We got Kent Smith from **THE CAT PEOPLE**, whom I'd used before in **GAMES**, John Carradine, Milton Parsons, and of course, Gale Sondergaard, who was entirely my choice. In fact, her role was originally written for a man. That part re-launched her career.

Did you have trouble getting Gloria Swanson for **KILLER BEES**?

No, but she wasn't the first choice. You know who was? Bette Davis. That's who the network wanted. And that was fine with me! Then I got a call from her I'll never forget. She came right on the phone—without announcing herself, saying hello, or anything—and said, "I'm absolutely terrified! My doctor says if I get stung by a bee it'll kill me!" She had a severe allergic reaction to bee stings.

So I suggested Gloria Swanson and we got her. She was great. Right at the beginning, she said, "I want it understood that everyone is to call me Miss

Swanson.” Moviemaking is usually an informal atmosphere, but we cooperated with her wishes. She always addressed me as “Mr. Harrington,” and I’d call her “Miss Swanson,” as instructed. I should say that Norma Desmond from **SUNSET BOULEVARD** and Gloria Swanson are about as different as two people can be. At the end of the shooting, I had occasion to telephone her, and I said, “Miss Swanson, this is Mr. Harrington.” There was a noticeable silence on the other end for a minute, and when she replied, she said, “It’s Gloria to you.”

From then on, through the years, she’d call me from time to time, and there’d be this wonderful voice on the phone from New York.

How did you do the special effects in the picture?

We used real bees. We shot it in Napa Valley. We actually had a bee wrangler! [LAUGHS] The original plan was to use drones, because they don’t have a stinger. But when we arrived, the season had passed and there were no drones. We thought of removing the stingers from the bees, but if you do that, they die, so that was no good. The wrangler came up with the idea of putting the bees temporarily in dry ice, which would paralyze but not kill them. Afterward, we had several people with surgeon’s scalpels slice the stingers off the bees, and these were put on Gloria Swanson’s face for her closeups.

There’s another scene where Kate Jackson goes up to an attic, and the whole place is swarming with bees. We didn’t have the resources to fake it optically. So I rigged up a scrim, between Kate and the bees, and lit it in such a way that the light didn’t hit the scrim, and you couldn’t tell it was there when you watched the movie.

Both *THE CAT CREATURE* and *THE DEAD DON’T DIE* were written by Robert Bloch. They have a pulp fiction quality that works both for and against them.

I must say that I’ve known Robert Bloch personally for many years and that he is one of my very favorite people. He is, of course, known for his pulp fiction stories—he began writing them in the ’30s—and some of them are quite marvelous. As for his screenplays, occasionally they suffer because situations which work convincingly on the printed page do not always transfer quite so persuasively to the screen. Joseph Stefano’s screenplay for **PSYCHO** was considerably different from Bloch’s original novel, which had a more physically grotesque approach to the subject matter. **THE DEAD DON’T DIE** was, in fact, based upon one of Bloch’s pulp stories. I think this

straightforward quality enhances the period setting, but it also introduces some hokeyness, which I tried to keep from getting out of hand. One change that was entirely my own concerned the character played by James McEachin. Originally, he was simply an investigator involved with the bizarre occurrences in the story. I re-wrote that part so that he would be a well-educated black man from the West Indies, to give some insight into zombies and voodooism, and lend an air of authenticity to the plot. I also originally wanted a more rugged leading man, someone like Robert Forster. George Hamilton was something like sixth on my list of preferences, although I think he did a very good job.

Do you remember the scene where Ray Milland explains to George Hamilton his mad scheme about using zombies to rule the world? Well, Ray was delivering this very colorful dialogue in his usual dry and urbane manner, and I was trying to get him to... raise the decibel of his performance, so to speak. We did take after take, and it wasn’t working. Finally, Ray became very exasperated and said to me, “You know, Curtis, I’m *not* Vincent Price!” [LAUGHS]

***THE DEAD DON’T DIE* ends very abruptly.**

As it turns out, it was cut about a week before its telecast. NBC—supposedly because of government investigations into television programming—became very nervous about some of the film’s violence, which nobody had objected to while we were shooting. They trimmed some grisly deaths, and a closing shot of Ray Milland hanging on a meat hook was taken out altogether. I was not consulted on any of this, but then, what does the *director* know?

After THE DEAD DON’T DIE, there is a gap of more than a year before your next credit, an episode of ABC-TV’s BARETTA.

The reason for that gap is that I had a major project stolen from me. The special two-hour television production, **THE LEGEND OF LIZZIE BORDEN** (1975), was to have been my project. I did a lot of research into the Borden case and developed the outline of a story, which I took to a writer friend of mine, William Bast, to develop into a screenplay. Paramount bought the script and engaged me to direct it. The film’s producer, George LeMaire, later conspired to get me out of my contract.

Why?

First, I should say that I had an unpublicized arbitration with Paramount through the Directors Guild and was awarded the full price of my contract. But why did he do it? Well, we will never really know, because even during the arbitration he told so

many lies that there's no way of determining the truth. As far as I can tell, it probably was because Elizabeth Montgomery had director approval. She didn't know me, and presumably she didn't know my work. Apparently, rather than do anything about it, they aced me out of it and got the director of her choice.² In retrospect, winning the arbitration was small compensation for having lost the contract to do the film, which I spent two years developing.

Now we come to *RUBY*. The version available on United Home Video is almost incoherent.

That's not my version; it's the TV version. Steve Krantz—the film's producer—later went in and added all those scenes of people sitting around and talking about nothing. I had my name removed from the TV version, so the tape version should be credited to "Alan Smithee."

It is, but the "Alan Smithee" credit is the last thing onscreen before the final fade-out. It even follows the "Any resemblance to persons living or dead..." disclaimer!

There's no director's credit at the beginning? Then it's in violation of the Director's Guild rules! Since it's "Alan Smithee," though, I guess it doesn't matter.

I assume that Krantz was responsible for the scenes involving the Sheriff (John Crawford) and his unfaithful wife. Did you shoot any scenes with the Sheriff at all?

I shot nothing with John Crawford; I don't even know who John Crawford is. There was one little throwaway scene, showing various people at the drive-in. There was a scene of a guy making out with his date and a boy comes to the window of the car in a Devil's mask. I shot that. And she says to her boyfriend, "Oh, stop it—if my husband, the Sheriff, ever finds out..." Well, Krantz took that as a cue and created the Sheriff for all those pointless scenes.

Krantz directed them himself?

No. The extra scenes were directed by some old, broken-down, former director of television commercials, whose name I instantly forgot if it ever was told to me.

Krantz also cut out a lot of scenes. The stigmata scene with Janit Baldwin is one of the most carefully crafted scenes in the entire film, and it's all cut out! Everything of any worth is cut out of that film. It's a total travesty.

The best comparison that comes to mind is *WALKING DOWN BROADWAY*, Erich von Stroheim's only talkie, which ended up as being part of a little programmer called *HELLO SISTER* (1933). The film starred ZaSu Pitts and Boots Mallory and had been completed when one of the studio lowbrows commented after an executive screening, "This film is only suitable to be shown at a psychiatric convention!" [LAUGHS] He proceeded to take the film out of von Stroheim's hands and turned the whole thing over to Alfred Werker, who changed the whole plot—about 75% of the film. So, the only point of interest about *HELLO SISTER* is that every once in awhile it cuts to the Stroheim footage, which is sheer wonder!

Does the tape have the scene of the body being discovered in the soft drink machine, when the paper cup fills with blood?

A body is discovered in a soft drink machine, but there's no cup filling with blood, and we never see the body itself. Whose body was it?

One of the gangsters. It was a tale of vengeance.

Oh. Well, that aspect was completely lost in this version!

[LAUGHTER] Do you see? Do you see why I had to have my name taken off? My God, if my name were still on that film, I'd be so embarrassed I couldn't live with myself! What about the scene with the old man in the wheelchair, where the chair is taken over by the gangster's spirit and goes out of control, throwing him around?

It's not there. I was wondering why you put a young man in old age makeup, when the part was no more demanding than being wheeled from one room to another.

[LAUGHS] Well then, there's nothing left! There's absolutely nothing left! The old man... I wanted to get Jack LaRue to play that character. It would have been such a wonderful touch! LaRue was willing to do it, too. It would have only cost us maybe \$500 more to have him, but Krantz wouldn't cough up the money. It was the absolute rock bottom of my career, working with that dreadful man.

To give you an insight into Steve Krantz... When it came time to choose a composer, we both made up lists of people we would like. We compared our lists and I told him, "There's only one composer on that list I beg you not to use. I think his music would ruin the picture." *He chose the one I begged him not to use.* The score is atrocious. We had virtually no money for the score of *THE KILLING KIND*, but I thought the young composer of that did a very nice job.

Your next TV movie—*DEVIL DOG: THE HOUND OF HELL*—starts out promisingly, with Martine Beswick presiding over the Black Mass, but then...

It's let down by the special effects. The producers didn't have the money for them. I worked like mad, trying to build a sense of menace...

It has some of the best suspense of any of your TV movies—really dark and eerie, not overlit like most TV...

... and then you see that dog and it just all goes out the window!

Not only were the special effects lousy and laughable, but the film was also very much meddled-with in the cutting. There are scenes—like the early scene of Martine Beswick and her people at the kennel—that aren't cut right. It looks all wrong. I can't cite chapter and verse, but I recall these jarring notes in the cutting, and I had originally cut the film so well. The line producer changed a lot of things in the film arbitrarily. The rhythm of my work is very important to me; you can't explain that to people, you just have to work for it. To show you that I'm not fantasizing about this—when the editor was asked to make these changes after I'd left the picture, he walked off, saying "I won't do it; it's perfect the way it is, and I'm not going to be responsible for destroying Mr. Harrington's work." The editor later told me that they hired an assistant to make those cuts.

MATA HARI, your most recent feature, was also subjected to cuts. What got removed from that?

Well, all of the sex scenes! There were several simulated sex scenes in the film, which were very important, because the whole point was that the real Mata Hari was a courtesan, whose entire career was based on seducing men.

I couldn't find a place in the film to use it, but my favorite anecdote, which I discovered while researching the character, involved some officials, who were trying to find evidence of her spying and had stopped her at a border crossing. One of these officials examined her luggage and found a bottle with a strange fluid in it. He said, "Aha! Now we know you're a spy—this is invisible ink!" And she said, "I beg your pardon! That is what I use to douche myself after intercourse to keep from getting pregnant!" [LAUGHS]

As far as I know, the film was cut nowhere else in the world except the United States. I have a friend in Copenhagen, and when the film was opening there I asked him what it was rated, just out of curiosity. It was rated the Danish equivalent of PG-13. The *uncut*



Janit Baldwin experiences stigmatic eruptions in the places where her father was shot to death in RUBY.

version! In Denmark, they censor films for violence, not for sex, which I think is infinitely healthier.

The full version can be easily obtained on the British PAL cassette, or the French SECAM version. In fact, I was unhappy with the final cuts of both versions; there were some scenes in the American version involving the German *attaché* in Madrid that I didn't want included, but the producers insisted. The scenes where Sylvia Kristel is masturbating while being watched through the keyhole by this German fellow next door... I wanted that whole subplot cut out. I took a transfer of the PAL cassette and made an amalgamation of the two versions, just to show to friends, should the occasion arise. It contains all of the eroticism but has these things I didn't like cut out. So there is a single tape in existence which is very close to my version.

Talk a bit about CRANIUM, the script you would like to direct.

CRANIUM is basically a traditional Mad Scientist story. It could be done in a Gothic setting, but I have purposely laid it in, if anything, a *futuristic* setting. I mean, it could take place today, but the environment in which the story takes place is a few years into the future. It's somewhat like the German



Enjoying a joke with Sylvia Kristel on the set of *MATA HARI*.

film, **THE HEAD** [*Die Nackte und der Satan*, "The Naked and the Devil," 1959]—which I love, for all its faults. So, even though the story could be about a mad scientist in the England of the 1880s, I have placed it in a very elegant contemporary setting, which I think gives a whole new quality to it, and brings it into the area of science fiction, rather than pure Gothic melodrama. That interests me, to do it that way, because one of my favorite horror films is **THE BLACK CAT** (1934), which was done in a marvelous Art Deco form.

Which contemporary horror stylists do you admire?

I like some of David Lynch's work very much, especially **BLUE VELVET** (1986) and the first season of **TWIN PEAKS**. Not what came later. In fact, when I noticed that David Lynch was using other directors on **TWIN PEAKS**, I had my short **ON THE EDGE** (1949) transferred to videotape and sent it to him, along with a letter asking if I might direct an episode. He didn't respond, never acknowledged it, so I guess he didn't like my work. I know that Coppola and Scorsese and some of Lynch's other contemporaries admire my work, because it's gotten back to me, but I was disappointed that I never heard from David Lynch.

I also love Dario Argento's films. My favorite is **INFERNO** (1980). His films are so utterly mad, so peculiarly written and acted that you can see why they have minimal commercial success over here—except **SUSPIRIA**, which was a big hit. He doesn't care about conventional narrative concerns at all; it's all

subservient to his obsession with the visual, and with the amazing sounds in his films. He's great; I always look forward to his films.

Argento acquired his cult following in America via the import video market because, like you, he's had trouble getting his work seen uncut in this country. What do you think of video trends like letterboxing?

I think letterboxing is fine, from a purist's point of view. But, unless you have an enormous screen, I think it's very tough to look at a letterboxed film on TV. The last time I saw **GAMES**—the only film of mine that would need to be letterboxed—was on television, and I thought it had been very well scanned. Naturally, it would be better to letterbox it, but I didn't object to the scanned version very much. I wish MCA/Universal would release **GAMES** letterboxed on laserdisc. Perhaps this issue of **VIDEO WATCHDOG** will inspire them!

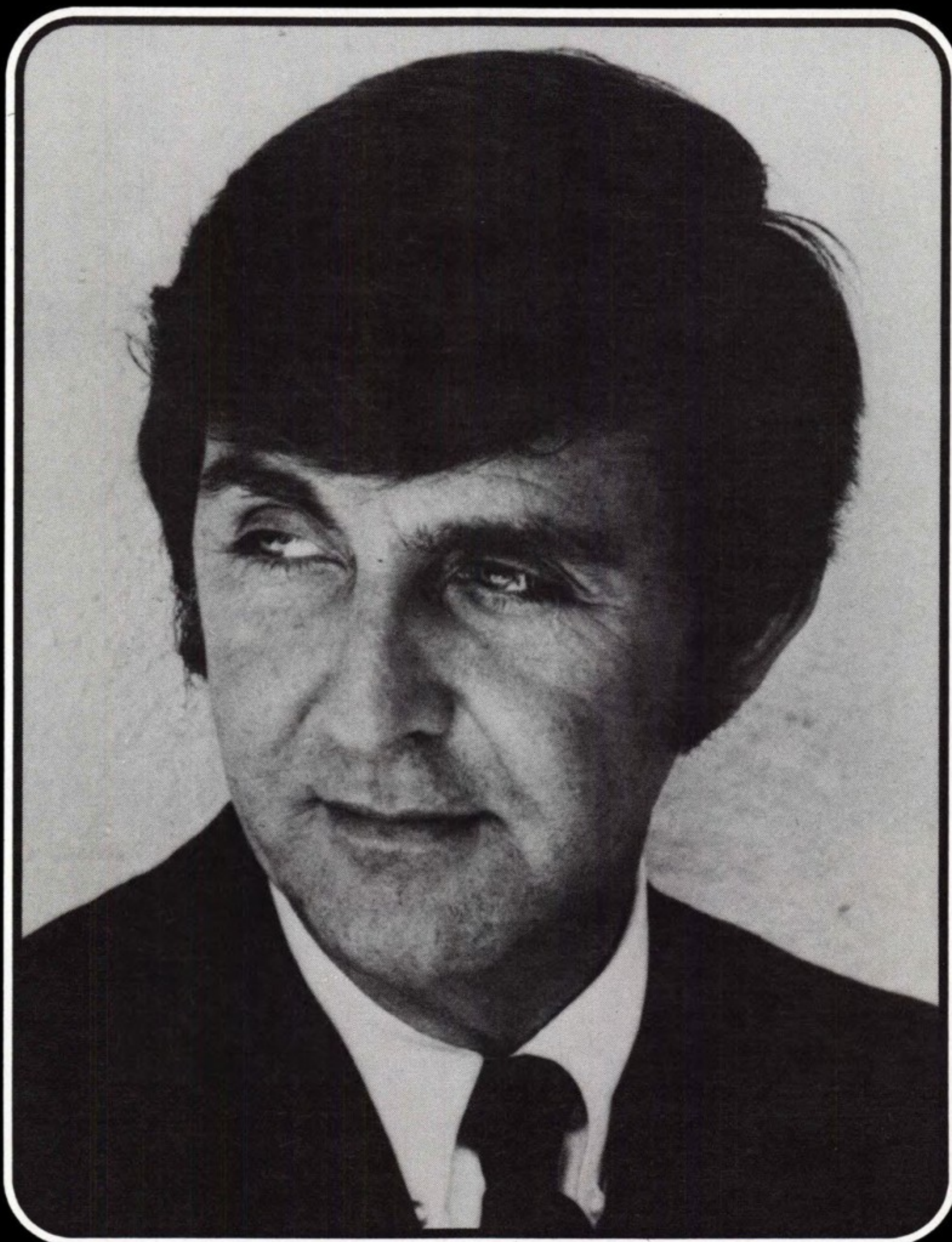
NOTES

¹ *Savage* had fifth billing in Robert Benton's **BAD COMPANY** (1972).

² **THE LEGEND OF LIZZIE BORDEN** (1975) was ultimately directed by Paul Wendkos, whose other made-for-television films included **FEAR NO EVIL** (1969), **THE BROTHERHOOD OF THE BELL** (1970), and **HAUNTS OF THE VERY RICH** (1973).



George Edwards



*In spite of a lot of nonsense from Universal, **GAMES** was completed in 24 days and on budget. It got great reviews, especially in Europe, but no matter how well-crafted and stylized we got, the one hit movie we needed was somehow never the one we were doing. **CRANIUM** has a shock about every 15 minutes; Curtis and I timed the script that way. It's '90s horror/sci-fi and I hope it becomes the hit Curtis deserves.*

*—Interview with David Del Valle
November 21, 1989*

Curtis Harrington Videography



Compiled by Tim Lucas

THE INAUGURATION OF THE PLEASURE DOME

1954/66, *Mystic Fire Video 039*, HF, \$29.95, 37m 30s

About 18m into Kenneth Anger's celebrated experimental film, Curtis Harrington appears as "Cesare"—the somnambulist portrayed by Conrad Veidt in Robert Wiene's **THE CABINET OF DR. CALIGARI** [*Das Kabinet des Dr. Calligari*, 1919]. It is his only onscreen appearance as an actor. Shot in 1954, this tape contains the third and final version of the film, which Anger assembled in London twelve years later; it is distinguished from earlier editions by its use of the "Souls in Hell" stock footage filmed for Harry Lachmann's **DANTE'S INFERNO**

(1935) by Rudolph Maté. Picture and sound quality are excellent.

RETURN TO PEYTON PLACE

1961, *CBS Fox Video 1329*, HF, \$39.95, 122m

Harrington was an associate producer of this sequel to **PEYTON PLACE** (1957; CBS Fox Video 1855, \$39.95), on which he had served as an uncredited casting assistant to producer Jerry Wald. He had previously worked as an uncredited assistant on Martin Ritt's **THE LONG HOT SUMMER** (1958; CBS Fox Video 1045, \$19.95), and received story credit for the Pat Boone vehicle **MARDI GRAS** (1958) before becoming an associate producer with Don

Siegel's **HOUND DOG MAN** (1959), starring Fabian. This film is cropped on video from its original Cinemascope (2.35:1) ratio.

NIGHT TIDE

1963, *Sinister Cinema H156*, \$19.00 ppd, 84m 59s Also: *Sinister Cinema D1-37* (with **BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN**), \$22.00 ppd.

Filmed in 1960, Harrington's feature debut did not receive theatrical distribution until 1963. It is the haunting story of Johnny Drake (Dennis Hopper)—a sailor on leave in Santa Monica Beach, California—who falls in love with Mora

*Directing Sir Ralph Richardson on the set of **WHOEVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?***

SENSUAL ECSTASY becomes SUPERNATURAL TERROR!



*A Unique Experience in the
Weird and Terrifying!*

Night TIDE

Starring
DENNIS HOPPER with **LINDA LAWSON** and **LUANA ANDERS** GAVIN MUIR
Produced by ARAM KANTARIAN • Written and Directed by CURTIS HARRINGTON
An AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL Release • A FILMGROUP Presentation

(Linda Lawson), a mysterious girl who works as a sideshow mermaid on the boardwalk. When Johnny learns that Mora's previous suitors have drowned under mysterious circumstances, he begins to suspect that she may be an actual mermaid whose siren song lures men to a watery grave. Perfectly poised between fantasy and reality, the *denouement* sports a clever ambiguity that answers all the viewer's questions without spoiling the show for either the realists or the fantasists. Hopper's performance as the young lovesick sailor, comfortable with beer and cigarettes but not yet quite at ease with women—or with men (he's taking

shore leave *alone*), is gently but firmly delineated. The supporting performances of Lawson and Luana Anders (as the "other woman") are equally genuine, and the locations—beat clubs and beachfronts, coffee houses and carnivals—are offbeat and magical. Bruno ve Sota appears briefly as a man on the stairs leading to Mora's apartment.

Sinister Cinema's cassette is taken from a 16mm print in very fine condition. **NIGHT TIDE** is also available from Sinister Cinema on a "Drive-In Double Bill" longplay cassette with its original co-feature, **BATTLE BEYOND THE SUN** (1963).

THE STRIPPER

1963, CBS Fox Video 1500, HF, \$59.95, 95m

Harrington was the associate producer of Franklin Schaffner's feature debut, based on William Inge's play *A LOSS OF ROSES*. He also supervised the final cut. This film is cropped on video from its original Cinemascope (2.35:1) ratio.

• QUEEN OF BLOOD

1965, HBO Video ID7655HB (LD only), D, \$29.95, 78m

• PLANET OF BLOOD

1965, Sinister Cinema S157, \$19.00 ppd. Also: Sinister Cinema DI-48 (with *TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE*), \$22.00 ppd.

Many sources (including this magazine!) have falsely reported that **QUEEN OF BLOOD** was built around elaborate spfx footage from Aleksandr Kozyr and Mikhail Karyukov's Soviet space epic *Nlebo Zowlet* ("The Sky Beckons," 1959); in fact, the unwitting donor was Karyukov's follow-up, *Meshte Nastreshu* ("A Dream Comes True," 1963)—about an alien spacecraft that accidentally crashes on Mars while responding to a Russian song emanating from Earth. Harrington's second feature remains the only one of the Russian hybrids produced by Roger Corman that stands on its own as an original creation. John Saxon and Dennis Hopper head an earth rescue mission, sent to an uninhabited planet in response to a distress signal from a crashed alien vehicle. The SOS turns out to be yet another kind of "siren song," as the alien in question (Florence Marly, giving the most smoldering performance ever delivered in green-face) is a sanguinivorous, egg-laying Queen, whose own blood carries deadly consequences

HIDEOUS BEYOND BELIEF with an INHUMAN CRAVING



when shed. As the Queen consumes the life of the Earth crew one-by-one, the survivors are forbidden to retaliate by earthbound executives (Basil Rathbone and Forrest J. Ackerman!) eager to study this volatile lifeform. Gee, sound familiar? Named “?” in the end credits, the Queen was identified as “Velana” in an “adult” paperback novelization by Charles Nuetzel, published in 1966 by Greenleaf Classics (GC206, 75¢).

QUEEN OF BLOOD was never officially released on cassette, being one of the films to debut on laserdisc. HBO Video's two-disc set—distributed by Image Entertainment—double-bills a ravishingly vivid transfer of **QUEEN** with a rescored but likewise gorgeous version of Mario Bava's **PLANET OF THE VAMPIRES** [*Terroro nello spazio*, “Terror Comes from Space,” 1965]. Unfortunately, the films are not chapter-encoded, apart from a single marker so that **PLANET** may be directly accessed on Side Two. Originally priced at \$59.95, the package was recently reduced in price by Image Entertainment to

\$29.95. **QUEEN** is timed on the sleeve at 81m, but runs only 78m.

The film is also available from Sinister Cinema under its AIP-TV title, **PLANET OF BLOOD**. This intact version—taken from a 16mm TV print—is the best of several PD versions in circulation, but the Pathé Color looks faded and pinkish compared to the laser version—which was apparently struck from the original negative. **PLANET OF BLOOD** is also available from Sinister Cinema as a “Drive-In Double Bill” longplay cassette, where it is paired with Stephanie Rothman's **TRACK OF THE VAMPIRE**, the padded TV version of **QUEEN**'s original co-feature, **BLOOD BATH** (1966).

An atrocious-looking, LP-mode edition released by Star Classics is no longer available.

VOYAGE TO THE PREHISTORIC PLANET

1966, Sinister Cinema S086, \$19.00 ppd, 73m 41s

This film—which was sold directly into television syndication without a theatrical release—

was scripted and assembled by Harrington from footage culled from the Soviet SF classic *Planeta Bur* (“Planet of Storms,” 1959)—itself available in a subtitled version from Sinister Cinema [VW 12:11]—and a small amount of original footage, featuring Basil Rathbone and Faith Domergue. Not considering himself worthy of a director's credit for this glorified dubbing assignment, Harrington credited the film's script and direction to “John Sebastian”—in *homage* to J.S. Bach. Despite his reluctance to claim the film as his own, **VOYAGE** is surprisingly consistent with themes already evident with Harrington's earlier films, particularly in terms of its emphasis on one cosmonaut's obsessive reaction to the sound of an unseen Venusian female's siren song. Apart from its faded color (a fact of all 16mm prints still in circulation), Sinister's print is in extremely good condition.

HOW AWFUL ABOUT ALLAN

1970, Edde Entertainment ED 107, HF, \$29.95, 73m 50s

Henry Farrell (WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO BABY JANE?) adapted his own novel for this, Harrington's first made-for-television feature. Anthony Perkins stars as Allan, whose circumstantial responsibility for the fire that killed his famous father and disfigured his sister has left him half-blind and paranoid. Released from a mental hospital into his sister's care, Allan becomes suspicious of a mysterious, quiet roomer (rumor?) in their house. Harrington—ably assisted by cameraman Fleet Southcott and composer Laurence Rosenthal—weave a macabre ambiance around this premise, but the script is ultimately too lightweight for any conceivable explanation of events to take the viewer by surprise. Perkins is believable, and there are

good supporting performances by Joan Hackett, Julie Harris, and Robert H. Harris (**HOW TO MAKE A MONSTER**). This cassette transfer is crisp with slightly oversaturated colors. Cinema Home Video (7095 Hollywood Blvd. #104-710, Hollywood CA 90028) is selling this title for \$9.95, plus \$3.50 P&H (\$15.00 overseas).

WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH HELEN?

1971, MGM/UA M202910, D, \$14.98, 101m

Phil Hardy's **ENCYCLOPEDIA OF HORROR MOVIES** calls it "beautifully realized... hugely entertaining and gory!" Look for our review next issue! Distributed by Warner Home Video.

WHO SLEW AUNTIE ROO?

1971, Vestron Video 4216 HF, \$69.95, 91m 7s

Shelley Winters stars as Rosie Forrest, a widowed millionairess obsessed with her dead daughter, whose annual Christmas party is attended by the best behaved children of a neighboring orphanage. Crashing the party on this particular Christmas Eve are mischievous siblings Christopher (Mark Lester) and Katy (Chloe Franks), who try to ingratiate themselves into "Aunt Roo's" demented household. When Roo shows a distinct preference for Katy, who resembles her dead child, Christopher's imagination orchestrates a devastating act of retribution. Using the Grimm fairy tale **HANSEL AND GRETEL** as a macabre point of reference, Harrington once again escorts the viewer behind the façade of a seemingly normal household into a dark realm of deceptions, blackmail, and corpse enshrinement. This is one of Harrington's handsomest films, and it's a surprisingly complex



achievement, often overlooked on account of its nursery chant title. (The onscreen title is **WHO-EVER SLEW AUNTIE ROO?**) Vestron's cassette looks and sounds excellent.

THE KILLING KIND

1973, various labels

John Savage plays Terry Lambert, an unwilling (and unable) participant in the gang rape of a young tease, who returns to live in his overbearing mother (Ann Sothorn)'s rooming house after several years in juvenile detention. After avenging himself on his gum-popping accuser, Terry finds himself beset by a number of adjacent females—the teasing roomer (Cindy Williams), the withdrawn neighbor (Luana Anders), an elderly roomer with a rat in her room, and of course, Mom. This moody, low-budget, psychological drama is not one of Harrington's most personal efforts, but it demonstrates what a wealth of emotional insight and creative chemistry he brings even to work-for-hire engagements.

THE KILLING KIND first arrived on video courtesy of Paragon Video, whose transfer was fairly murky. It has since surfaced on

any number of budget-line "public domain" labels, including American Video, Neon Video, and United American Video. All of these SP-mode tapes contain the complete 95m film, but our preference is Neon Video's edition, which is bright, in good condition, and comes packaged in a reproduction of the film's original poster art—much as Harrington may personally detest it. The current availability of any of these titles, which originally sold for less than \$10, is anyone's guess.

THE DEAD DON'T DIE

1974, Worldvision 4019, \$49.95, 73m 15s
Goodtimes Home Video VGT 9005, \$9.95

George Hamilton stars in this atmospheric adaptation of Robert Bloch's pulp story, about a man who uncovers a mad plot to rule the world with zombies while attempting to clear the name of his wrongfully executed brother. Set during the Depression of the 1930s, the fantasy elements are curiously juxtaposed with the lamentable realities of the era, particularly the phenomenon of marathon dancing—whose participants seem less alive than some of the corpses

Hamilton encounters. Ray Milland, Joan Blondell, Reggie Nalder, Milton Parsons, and Yvette Vickers fill out the impeccably chosen cast, and Harrington pulls off an exquisite, neon-colored nightmare sequence reminiscent of the most hallucinatory passages of Corman's Poe films. Worth seeing, but the Goodtimes Video is much too dark to be seen easily, and the Worldvision release is not much better.

RUBY

1977, VCI/United Home Video 7002, HF, \$19.95, 95m 9s

When a swampside drive-in plays host to a series of bizarre and unexplained murders, the crimes are eventually traced to the autistic daughter (Janit Baldwin) of the theater's owner—a former gun moll (Piper Laurie)—who is being possessed by the vengeful spirit of her father, an assassinated gangster (Sal Vecchio). That's not the only supernatural event; the drive-in is also playing host to Nathan Juran's **ATTACK OF THE 50 FOOT WOMAN** (1958) *seven years before it was made!* (Both **ATTACK** and **RUBY** were distributed by the Woolner Brothers of Dimension Pictures.)

Harrington does not disown the 84m theatrical version of this film as commonly reported, explaining that "95% of it is my work, for better or worse, but I did not have control over the final cut, so I ask that it be approached with that caveat in mind." He does, however, strongly disapprove of producer Steve Krantz's TV version, which is the version released on tape by VCI/United Home Video. "That version is perhaps only 50% mine," Harrington says. "Piper Laurie was so shocked by what Krantz intended to do with the reshoots that she refused to participate in them." The director's credit—the very last thing onscreen

before the final fade-out—is given to "Alan Smithee." Ironically, the video is packaged in a reproduction of the film's original one-sheet poster, on which Harrington's name *does* appear!

Among the many missing scenes are literally all of its original gory highlights (which obscures the identities of not only the murder victims, but their murderer as well!), an extended possession/stigmata sequence, and a scene of Fred Kohler's wheelchair being telepathically propelled out of control. All of the dreary sequences involving the town sheriff (John Crawford) were added later without Harrington's approval. The tape features a dark and murky transfer, whose image has a tendency to flutter during brightly-lit shots.

Produced for \$650,000, **RUBY** ironically became Harrington's greatest commercial success and at the time of its release—prior to the release of John Carpenter's **HALLOWEEN** (1978)—was considered among the most successful independent films ever made. We can only hope that the original theatrical version responsible for that formidable success will someday find its way to home video.

DEVIL DOG: THE HOUND OF HELL

1978, Lightning Video LA505, HF, OP, 95m 8s

This made-for-television feature has a reputation for being bad but it's also (unintentionally) *very* funny. Richard Crenna and Yvette Mimieux star as the parents of two children who fall under the influence of a German Shepherd puppy sired by a Satanist cult, led by R.G. Armstrong and Martine Beswick. With glowing eyes, the adorable pup tilts its head at their Mexican maid until she goes up in flames. When Mimieux falls under its evil influence (a change dramatized by

a sudden interest in having sex), Crenna seeks an answer to his dilemma by consulting doctors, occult bookstores, and finally a decrepit Shaman (Victor Jory) in Ecuador. The best line: "Of course, it could simply be my imagination, you know, I could be cracking up... a classic case of paranoia... a man *hounded by his dog!*"

Lightning's transfer is good, but a bit on the dark side, and the post-production special effects sequences are doubly so.

MATA HARI

1984, MGM/UA Home Video 800583, HF, \$79.95, 105m

Harrington's most recent feature film was never distributed theatrically in this country. It is an underrated film, a remarkable evocation of 1920s Europe compromised only by an insubstantial lead performance by Sylvia Kristel. Although visually striking in the role, Kristel's flat reading robs the film of a continuous, emotional point-of-reference—a formidable flaw, considering that Harrington's well-researched, fictionalized drama was the first document to judge Mata Hari innocent of spying charges, a view only subsequently shared by her biographers.

MATA HARI was also badly compromised by MPAA interference, losing four important scenes from its domestic release:

- 10m into film—Most of Mata Hari's tryst with a stranger on a train was deleted, with only the details of her partner's assassination by blow-dart (at the height of orgasm!) left intact.

- 31m into film—A brief scene of Mata and Ladoux (Oliver Tobias) making love in bed. Afterwards, Ladoux finds her staring out the bedroom window at the rainy evening. "What do you want?" he asks. "Nothing," she replies.

- 36m into film—An extended scene of Karl (Christopher Casa-



Sylvia Kristel in the topless duel removed from the domestic version of *MATA HARI*.

nove) making love with Mata in an abandoned chateau during a raging storm. There are shots of Karl performing oral sex on Mata in a chair, followed by Mata in a dominant coital position on the floor. (There are glimpses of this scene during Karl's rehabilitation delirium much later in the movie.) In an *après-sex* conversation, Mata explains that her professional name means "Eye of the Dawn" and that she is known as Lady MacLeod because she was once briefly married to a Danish officer.

- 59m into film—After the murder of Captain von Krohn by Fraulein Doktor (Gaye Brown) and Herr Wolff (Gottfried John), Mata attends a decadent party with Baron Joubert (Anthony Newlands) where frontally nude male and female models adorn the room like live statues. Another woman sees Mata and the Baron together and accuses the Baron of duplicity,

calling Mata a "whore" and demanding satisfaction. The two women strip to the waist and fence, Mata slashing her opponent's stomach. Later, the party culminates in scattered trysts, as Mata and the Baron smoke opium in bed. The scene resumes in the US version as the Baron exits the bed, sending two women to take his place with Mata, watching their *ménage à trois* from the sidelines.

Harrington personally disapproves of the subplot involving Captain von Krohn, the German attaché who observes Mata Hari masturbating on two occasions in Madrid. Producer Menahem Golan insisted that they be included in the final cut. Golan also insisted on having the film's European locales identified, hence the line "I'm taking you behind the German lines" is followed by outdoor scenery redundantly captioned "Behind the German Lines."

Aside from these cuts and creative intrusions, MGM/UA's cassette looks and sounds exceptionally good.

ADDENDA

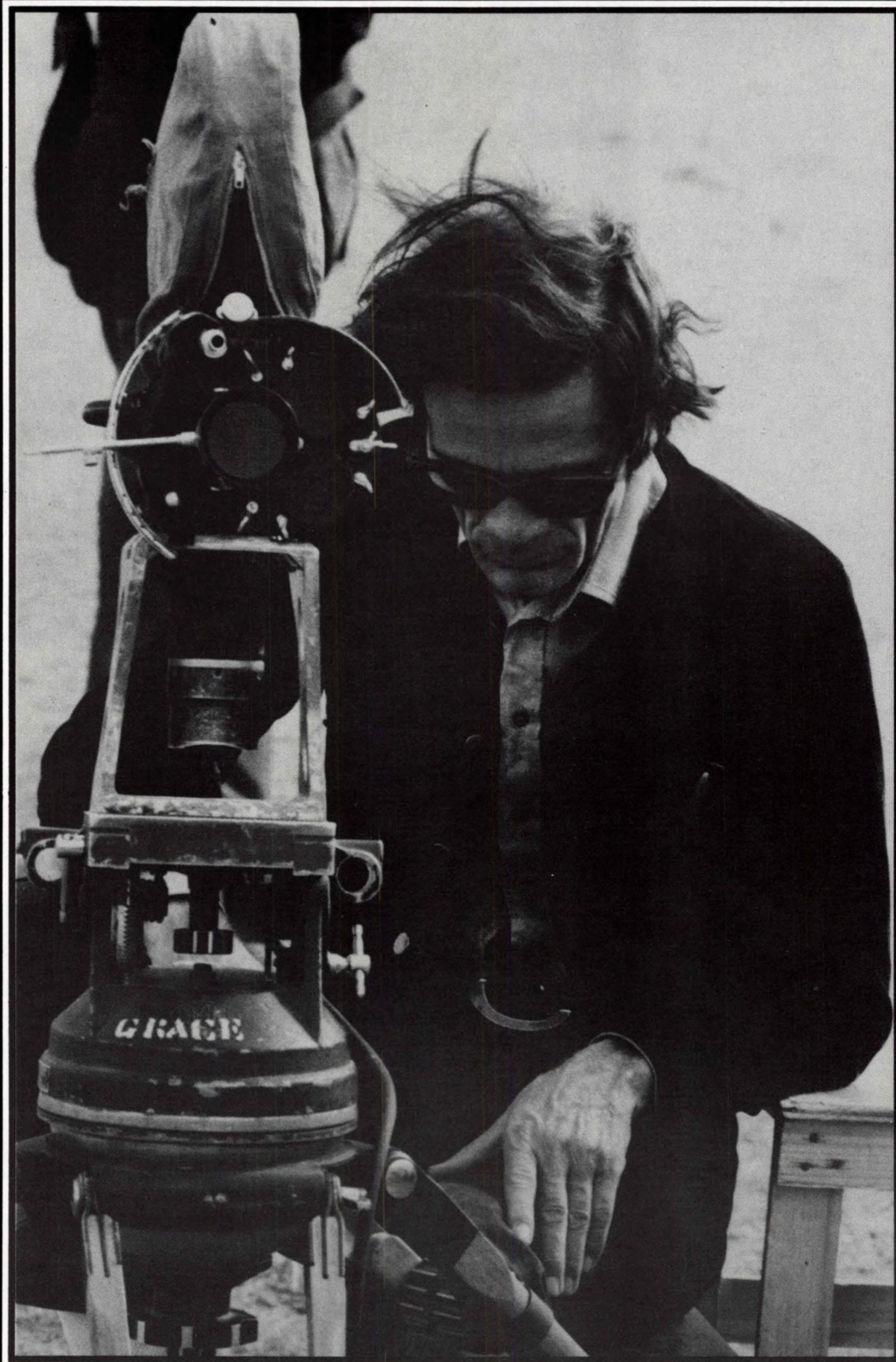
Curtis Harrington also directed two other made-for-television features—*THE CAT CREATURE* (1973) and *KILLER BEES* (1974)—which remain in TV syndication; neither is currently available on tape or disc.

Harrington's series television credits include *THE LEGEND OF JESSE JAMES* (1966); *BARETTA* (1975); *TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED* ("A Hand for Sonny Blue" with Rick Nelson, 1976); *LUCAN* (1977); *LOGAN'S RUN* ("Stargate"—final episode, 1977); *CHARLIE'S ANGELS* (1977-8); *VEGAS* (1978); *DARKROOM* ("Makeup" with Billy Crystal, 1981); *DYNASTY* (1983); *GLITTER* (1985); *THE TWILIGHT ZONE* ("Voices in the Earth" with Martin Balsam, 1986); and *THE COLBYS* (1986).



By
Tim
Lucas

LASERDISCS



Pier Paolo Pasolini, circa 1964.

• **ACCATTONE**

1961, Image Entertainment
ID8513WB, D, \$49.98, 118m 58s

• **ARABIAN NIGHTS**

1974, Image Entertainment
ID8509WB, D/LB, \$59.95, 130m 43s

• **THE CANTERBURY TALES**

1972, Image Entertainment
ID8507WB, D/LB, \$49.95, 110m 43s

• **THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW**

1966, Image Entertainment
ID8512WB, D/LB, \$59.95, 137m

In addition to **THE DECAMERON** [VW 13:46-7], Image Entertainment has issued these titles by Pier Paolo Pasolini (1922-75), in collaboration with Water Bearer Films.

Accattone, which carries the bracketed translation "The Scrounger," was Pasolini's first feature, based on his 1955 novel *Ragazzi di vita* ("Street Hustlers"). Franco Citti stars as Vittorio Cataldi—"Accattone" to his friends—a charismatic young pimp who seems to debase everything and everyone he touches, even with the best of intentions. The crux of the film documents Accattone's infatuation with an innocent young woman named Stella (Franca Pasut), a relationship as ripe with the possibility of his redemption as it is with the probability that this fallen angel will follow his previous lovers into prostitution.

Shot in stark, B&W, neorealist style by the great Tonino delli Colli (**ONCE UPON A TIME IN THE WEST**), the film's sunny desolation, its documentation of evils perpetrated by the simple need to survive and, most of all, its attention to the surreal dreams of its protagonist, seem strongly influenced by Luís Buñuel's **Los Olvidados** (1950), while the

vitality of Pasolini's young hoodlums—played by a talented, non-professional cast—surely exercised a similar influence over the early features of Martin Scorsese. The charismatic Citti, himself an amateur at the time of filming, continued to work professionally as an actor, starring in Pasolini's own **OEDIPUS REX** (1967) and **PIG-PEN** (*Porcile*, 1969). Renowned Italian novelist Elsa Morante (**HISTORY**) appears briefly as a middle-aged prostitute, and Bernardo Bertolucci (on his first film assignment) is credited as the director's assistant. The gifted Flavio Mogherini (**HERCULES**) was the art director, and the excerpts from J.S. Bach's sublime "Passion According to Saint Matthew"—whose counterpoint to the story's squalor is as responsible as any other factor for **Accattone**'s resonant quality—were orchestrated and conducted by Carlo Rustichelli.

The main titles are letterboxed at approximately 1.60; thereafter, the image is inexplicably cropped to 1.33, with the exception of a single letterboxed shot of a hand gripping a dagger during a fight scene. As with Image's other Pasolini discs, **Accattone** is in Italian with white subtitles; in this case, Delli Colli's predilection for overexposed whites at times render the titles hard (if not impossible) to read, and the translation is also imperfect, often replacing "have" with "of" (eg., "Ciccio must of sent him.") An epigram from Dante's *Purgatorio* presented at the film's beginning is not translated.

THE GOSPEL ACCORDING TO SAINT MATTHEW [*Il vangelo secondo Matteo*], the next chronological release, is frequently cited by American critics as Pasolini's most accomplished film, but this is perhaps mostly a testimonial on behalf of its narrative familiarity and approachability. Far less fantastic than Hollywood's glamorized

tellings of the Christ saga, Pasolini's austere B&W biography does show Christ (Enrique Irazoqui) healing the misshapen and walking on water, but these miracles are presented without ostentation and never allowed to dramatically eclipse the greater dramatic importance of Christ's teachings. Beautifully photographed (again by Delli Colli) and scored with an experimental and moving *mélange* of classical, Middle Eastern, Delta blues, and gospel music, **THE GOSPEL** is somewhat hindered in its didactic preference to *tell* rather than to say or show; Christ's audience either follows him at once or turns against him, and it is a weakness that we never see the effect of his words in the twilight tense of persuasion. That small criticism aside, the film is required viewing and should be commended, at the very least, for exposing the other films on the subject as the painted women they are. The film is letterboxed at approximately 1.75:1, and the B&W photography looks handsome and dusky; the English subtitles are white but subtly outlined in black, making them easier to read against white backdrops of sky, sand and linen. The third side of this two-disc set is presented in CAV; the still frames are precise, but the backgrounds tend to tremble during moving shots.

The remaining two releases—**THE CANTERBURY TALES** [*I racconti di Canterbury*] and **ARABIAN NIGHTS** [*Il fiore della mille e una notte*, "Selections from The Thousand and One Nights"]—follow **THE DECAMERON** in Pasolini's "Trilogy of Life." **THE CANTERBURY TALES**, adapted from Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th Century stories in verse, is not up to the quality of its distinguished bookends. According to Pasolini's biographer Enzo Siciliano, the movie was filmed as the director's love affair with actor Ninetto Davoli—who announced

his intention to marry during the filming—was coming to a close, which may help to explain its jagged and diffuse nature. A group of travelers on pilgrimage to Canterbury decide, while pausing at a village tavern, to shorten their journey by telling stories. Unlike Chaucer's book, in which the characters are invented by the travelers, the motley crew of travelers here appear in their own stories. Adultery, urination and flatulence are the prevalent topics, all covered with NC-17 explicitude. Very little of the material here is of a fantastic nature, but the film ends memorably with a greedy friar's tour of Hell—where other friars are shown being defecated in diarrhetic legions from the backsides of colossal devils. Photographed by Tonino delli Colli in Canterbury with an English and Italian cast and crew, the film is clumsily dubbed into English and letterboxed at approximately 1.75:1. The cast includes Ninetto Davoli (as a Chaplinesque tramp-cum-cook), Tom Baker, Laura Betti, Hugh Griffith, Jenny Runacre, and Robin Askwith. Incidentally, the cover photo of Baker and Betti is surprisingly pornographic—what on earth is she *doing* to that man? According to the film, she's proposing.

ARABIAN NIGHTS is the outstanding component of the trilogy and, at least among devotees of the Italian fantastic cinema, an underappreciated classic of its genre. When Zumurrud, a beautiful slave girl, is announced for sale by her master, she clandestinely supplies the poor and inexperienced Nur ad Din with the money to buy her. After a brief but intoxicating romance, Zumurrud is abducted by a blue-eyed stranger and eventually escapes in male clothing to a walled city, the people of which are waiting to bequeath its kingdom to the next man who

comes there. Zumurrud uses her disguise to rule the city, punish her captor, and become reunited with Nur ad Din. During the course of this framing story, a number of fantastic tales are told: a man (Ninetto Davoli) breaks his engagement on the eve of his wedding when he is attracted to a beautiful madwoman who communicates with him in symbols that only his former fiancée can understand; another man discovers a subterranean temple where a princess has been sent by her father to be a demon (Franco Citti)'s sex slave, and is transformed into a chimp; and a shipwrecked sailor discovers the hiding place of a prince whose father is protecting him from a prophesied assassination, and finds himself unable to resist fulfilling the prophecy.

Filmed in Ethiopia, Yemen, Iran and Nepal, **ARABIAN NIGHTS** is a sumptuous and wholly convincing retreat into the exotic mysteries of the distant past. The cinematography is never less than beautiful, though the source print contains some watermarks and slight scratching. The 1.66:1 frame is pleasingly letterboxed at approximately 1.75 and the English subtitles (by William Weaver, the distinguished translator of Italo Calvino's novels) are always legible. On the disc we audited, the rich monophonic soundtrack was accessible on Side 2—the side with all the ringing bells—only in analog, but there was no noticeable diminution in volume or quality. Side 3 is presented in CAV. This export version of the film is reportedly 25m shorter than the original Italian release prints. The film is given 14 chapter marks, which helps the viewer to discern more clearly when these sometimes elliptic stories start and end, though I would quarrel with the placement of one or two chapters on Side 2, where the stories sometimes commence earlier than designated.

CAPE FEAR

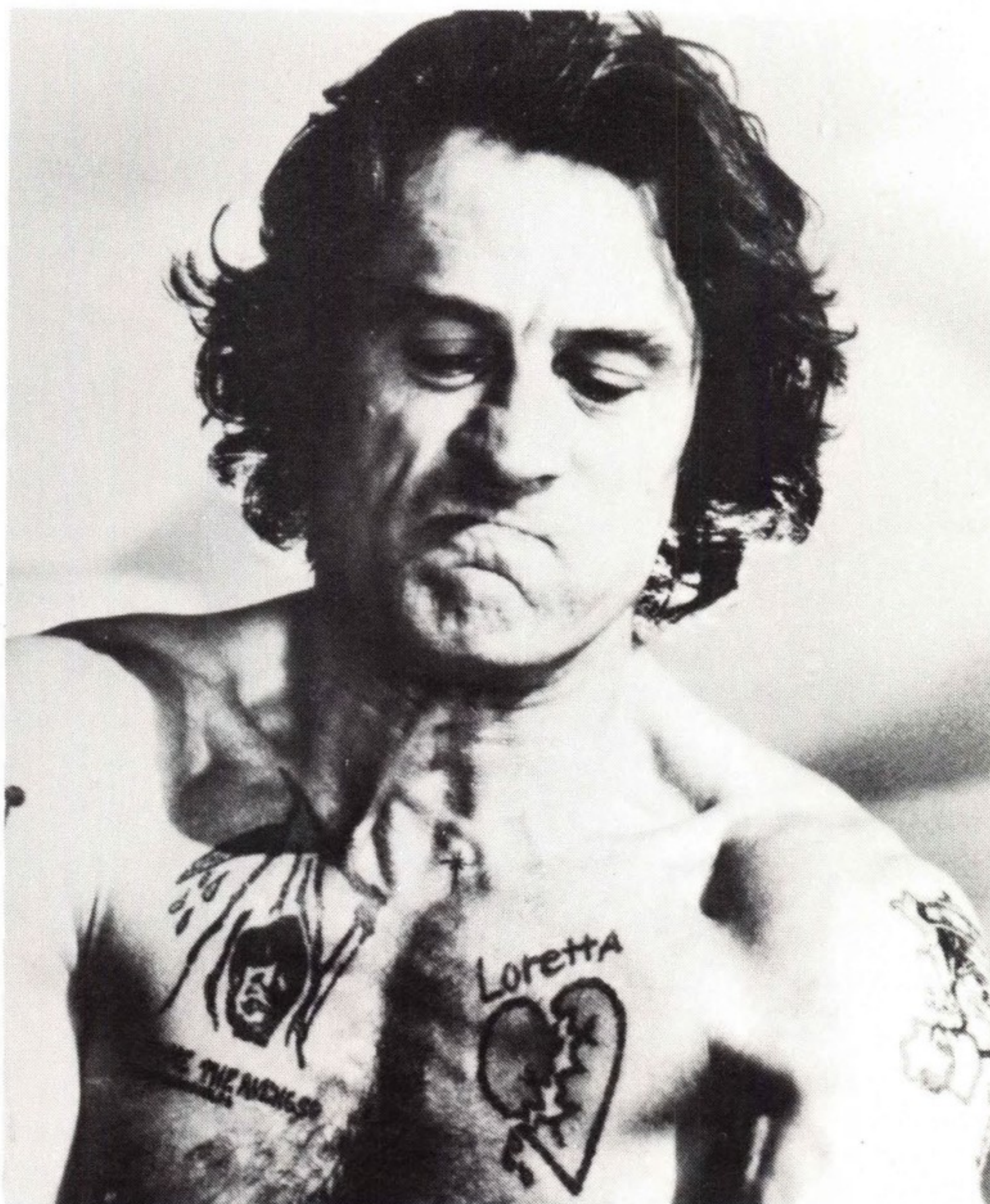
1991, MCA Universal 41263
D/S-SS/CC, \$39.98, 128m 5s

Taking his cue from other contemporary directors who have opted to re-envision (rather than remake) classic films, Martin Scorsese *inverts* the 1962 Robert Mitchum cult thriller (based on John D. MacDonald's groundbreaking crime novel *THE EXECUTIONERS*) with interesting results. Rather than retell the original story—about a rapist who uses his jail term to study law, enabling him to terrorize his attorney's family upon his release within legal limits—Scorsese and screenwriter Wesley Strick use MacDonald's premise to examine the extent to which American values have become so hopelessly blurred in the intervening years. Here, the vengeful Max Cady (Robert DeNiro) is remodelled (with a nod to Mitchum's other classic portrait of evil, **NIGHT OF THE HUNTER**) as a tattooed evangelical demon, incarcerated for rape and assault after his attorney Sam Bowden (Nick Nolte) suppresses evidence of his victim's "promiscuity." When Cady is unleashed on society fourteen years later, he taunts Bowden like a bad conscience, able to overcome even the most outrageous beatings and burnings by virtue of his strict adherence to the Lord. With his dog-simple demeanor and mountain-man accent, DeNiro's Cady at times seems a ghostly reminder of this country's uncomplicated pioneer origins, knocking with wounded insistence at the heart of what has become of his pioneer dream. Meanwhile, Bowden's relationship with his wife Leigh (Jessica Lange) and 15 year-old daughter Danielle (Juliette Lewis) is collapsing under the stress of societal guilts too deep-rooted and nebulous to be defined by Cady alone. The inversion is made

complete by the casting of the 1962 film's villain and hero—Mitchum and Gregory Peck—in the respective roles of a concerned sheriff and the most ruthless, cold-peckered attorney that big money can buy.

As admirable as this thematic challenge may be, **CAPE FEAR** '91 is ultimately undermined by Scorsese's juggernaut direction; the viewer is consistently dazzled, literally punched from one scene to the next, until the bombardment drains away all sense of modulation. It's a supreme display of directorial and editorial skill, but it's always more than the material requires. The same sense of disproportionment extends to DeNiro's character who, in his superhuman displays during the film's final third, owes more to **PSYCHO**'s Norman Bates and **FRIDAY THE 13TH**'s Jason than to MacDonald or Mitchum. The contrived framing device—in which the film is presented as Danielle's homework assignment, a "remembrance" in the style of Thomas Wolfe's novel **LOOK HOMEWARD**, **ANGEL**—also doesn't seem to earn its keep.

The performances are uniformly strong—we especially liked Illeana Douglas as Nolte's ill-fated admirer, and Joe Don Baker as a private investigator who takes his Jim Beam with a dollop of Pepto-Bismol (and who delivers a marvelous soliloquy about the Southern tradition of fear). VW interviewee Paul Nagel [VW 2:19-29]—who dubbed the K. Gordon Murray Mexican monster films into English in Coral Gables, Florida—cameos as a parade attendant... and his screen credit is misspelled "Nagle," just like in the Murray films! Freddie Francis' superb widescreen photography treads just the right line between sensuousness and intimidation, and Elmer Bernstein's



*"I dunno whether to look at him, or read him!" Robert DeNiro teaches someone the difference in Martin Scorsese's **CAPE FEAR**.*

score—based on Bernard Herrmann's music from the 1962 version—packs a sonic wallop in stereo surround.

If you can forgive the film's excesses and just go along for the ride, MCA Universal's disc is a real treat. The letterboxing of the Panavision frame is a perfect 2.35:1. The image is sharp, colorful, and luscious, and the digital stereo surround mix—with its thunderstorms, fireworks displays, jangling keys, crunching doorknobs, and trilling telephones—is ideal demonstration material. The break between Sides 2 and 3 is also thoughtfully placed to least inter-

fere with the film's suspense. In a decision so uncommon for MCA as to seem mandated by the director, the disc offers no chapter stops. Also available on disc in a must-to-avoid cropped version (MCA Universal 41105, \$39.95).

MCA Universal has also released J. Lee Thompson's original **CAPE FEAR** (40514, \$34.98) on disc; it is a testament to that film's accomplishment—and Mitchum's hair-raising performance as Cady—that it doesn't look the least bit naïve in comparison with Scorsese's contemporary remake, simply cleaner and more effectively primal. The crisp B&W image is



The writing's on the wall, but Roy Scheider and Richard Dreyfuss still can't convince Murray Hamilton to close Amity Beach in JAWS.

cropped without significant impairment from the original ratio.

JAWS

1975, MCA Universal 41086
D/LB/CC, \$39.98, 124m

Steven Spielberg has finally gotten around to permitting the letterboxing of his back catalogue. MCA Universal's **THE SUGARLAND EXPRESS** (1974), Voyager's **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS OF THE THIRD KIND** (1977), Paramount's **RAIDERS OF THE LOST ARK** (1981) and **INDIANA JONES AND THE TEMPLE OF DOOM** (1984), Columbia/Tristar's **HOOK** (1991) and this title have all surfaced on widescreen discs within the last six months, encouraging a re-examination of Spielberg's long-cropped career. (A supplemented **1941** was also announced by

MCA, then reconsidered.) **JAWS**, Spielberg's second feature film, continues to rank with **RAIDERS** as his most satisfying work; **CLOSE ENCOUNTERS**, his most ambitious film, is revealed on disc to be about the act of seeing and, even moreso, about being overwhelmed, and is thus substantially diminished on the home screen. This tense, humorous and exciting adaptation of (the premise behind) Peter Benchley's hackneyed best-seller works extremely well on video, primarily because it is about believable, living characters fighting for their lives—not alienated characters searching themselves, and asking us to search along with them, for their lost innocence.

Available in widescreen for the first time in almost twenty years, **JAWS** has lost none of its ability to

entertain and terrify an audience. Robert Shaw, Roy Scheider, and particularly Richard Dreyfuss give colorful, vital performances, and their search for the murderous Great White Shark in the waters outside Amity Beach reminds us of what a promising director Spielberg was before he made a covenant with his inner child. Supported by Bill Butler's lush cinematography, Verna Fields' masterful editing, and a craftily manipulative sound mix, Spielberg's film makes us jump even when we know the scare is coming—even when we re-cue the scare for a second pass! The only real fault remains the now-classic (go figure) John Williams score which, apart from its derivative main theme, whitewashes too many tense seafaring moments with insipid "high adventure" themes.

A film of such outstanding quality would make almost any laserdisc presentation—particularly a letterboxed edition—look good. While enjoyable on its own terms, MCA Universal's two-disc set is not without faults. There is a notation on the sleeve that this is the "Home Video Version" with "Some Music Rescored." (Only some beach radio music appears to have been affected... but weren't the music rights worth clearing to keep Universal's most successful film of all time textually intact?) The Panavision (2.35:1) frame is letterboxed at approximately 2.40:1; despite the seeming generosity of these dimensions, there appears to have been some fudging going on, as the compositions look vertically and horizontally constricted. (I clearly remember the ocean being visible below the Orca's pulpit [Side 2, 28:35] in theaters, and also that the ship's mast was fully visible in Side 2's final shot.) Side 3 is presented in CAV, allowing the viewer to see exactly how much of the film's bite was due to Verna Fields, rather than the shark. MCA has given the film 22 chapter marks and, though the sleeve mentions only one, the extra chapter contains *two* theatrical trailers. The running time is also erroneously listed as 120m.

THE TALES OF HOFFMANN

1951, *Voyager/Criterion CC1300L*, D/MA, \$99.95, 127m

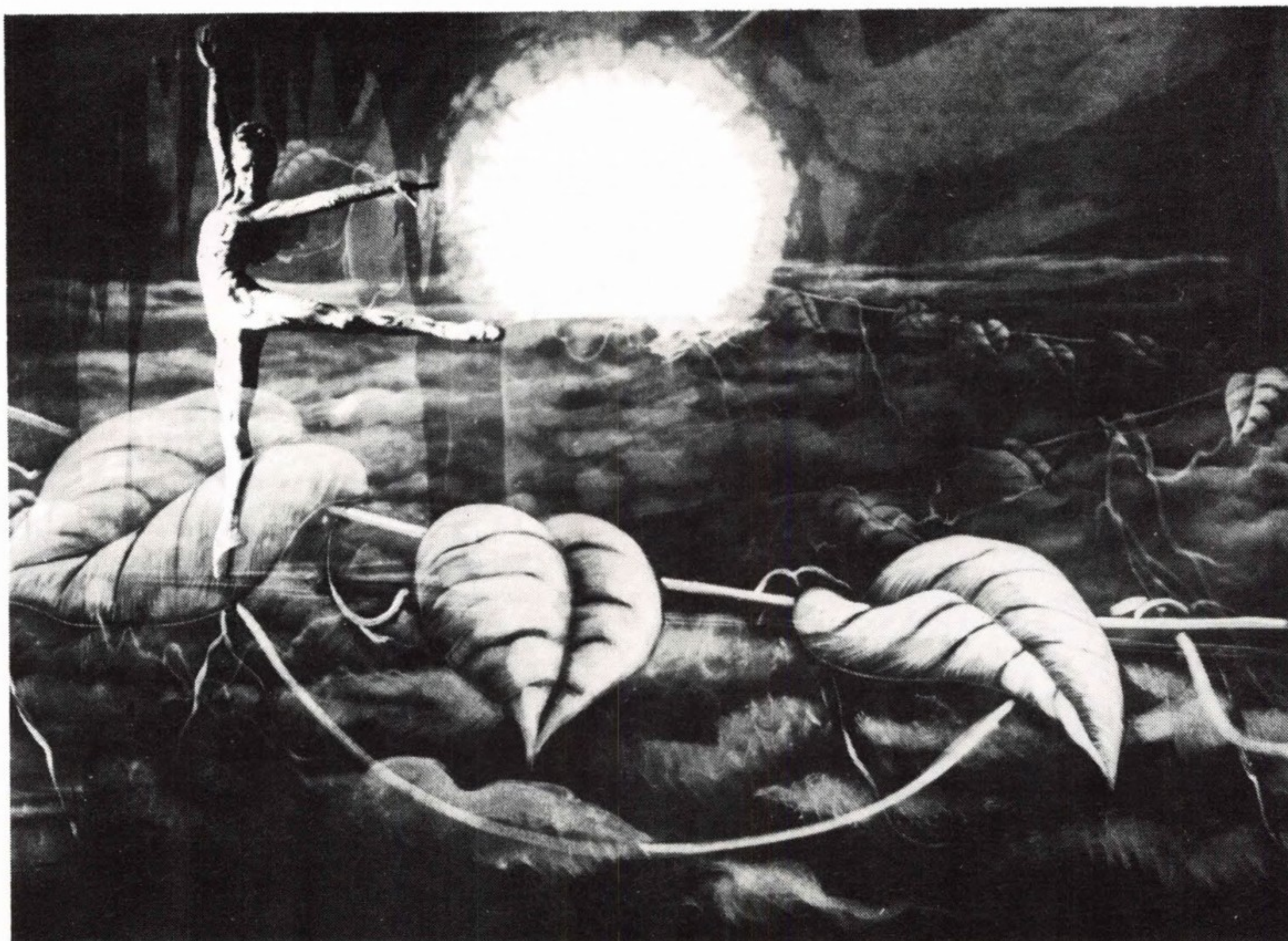
Continuing Voyager's "Criterion Collection" series of the films of Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger is this dazzling presentation of their Technicolor "experiment in composed film," based on Dennis Arundell's English-language adaptation of

Jacques Offenbach's classic 1881 opera. The opera takes as its subject the unhappy love life of the German writer and composer Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann (1776-1822) who, while awaiting a ballerina's reply to a love letter (appropriately written on a handkerchief, and suppressed by a fellow suitor) in a tavern, drinks himself into a stupor while regaling a crowd of admirers with three fantastical stories of unrequited love. The first, "The Tale of Olympia," is set in France, where the young Hoffmann (played—as elsewhere in the film—by New York tenor Robert Rounseville) visits the workshop of a maker of magic spectacles, through which the young writer is fooled into proposing to an unfeeling, robotic ballerina. The second, "The Tale of Giulietta," finds an older, more disillusioned Hoffmann in Venice, where he is attracted to a raven-haired seductress, who has made a deal with a Satanic paramour to steal away his reflection. The final story, "The Tale of Antonia," finds Hoffmann on a Greek isle with the first returned love of his life, a consumptive singer under the doubtful care of the vampiric Dr. Miracle. As this last story ends, we find Hoffmann and his audience still at the tavern, where the ballerina he adores sweeps into the room... just in time to see him pass out, and be swept away on the arm of his competitor.

In a clever shorthand technique first introduced in their masterpiece **THE LIFE AND DEATH OF COLONEL BLIMP** (1943), Powell and Pressburger use actors in recurring roles to facilitate the viewer's understanding of Hoffmann's complex emotions. Pamela Brown (the impossibly sexy Catriona of **I KNOW WHERE**

I'M GOING, 1945) shadows Rounseville throughout the film as Hoffmann's ambiguous male companion, Nicklaus—apparently less a real person than a projection of Hoffmann's own youthful psyche, conscientious and clear-headed before the hormones kicked in. In the Prologue, Epilogue, and stories, the expressive Robert Helpmann embodies Hoffmann's various deceivers and nemeses; Leonid Massine plays the subservient roles; and, in the Prologue and "Olympia," the object of Hoffmann's affections is performed by the gifted star of **THE RED SHOES**, Moira Shearer—who (as Martin Scorsese cleverly observes in his commentary track) often danced to death in Powell's films, including the iconoclastic **PEEPING TOM** (1959). Giulietta, the *femme fatale* who seduces Hoffmann's soul away from him, is played by the luscious Ludmilla Tcherina (Boronskaja in **THE RED SHOES**), looking for all the world like Barbara Steele in a heady, Venetian fever dream. Antonia (Ann Ayars), unlike the film's other women, is not a flamboyant or romanticized symbol of femininity, but rather an all-too-mortal woman, framed in a sober context that makes her seem the most grounded of Hoffmann's loves, until the *mise en scène* itself explodes into the outer limits of delirium.

This meticulously designed film—perhaps best described as a darkly erotic, live action **FANTASIA**—was inspired by the success of the "Red Shoes" ballet sequence in that earlier Archers production, and by the musically choreographed climax of **BLACK NARCISSUS** (1947). Within the context of painstakingly designed and camera-choreographed shots, the actors danced to a pre-recorded



Moira Shearer dances through the designs of Hein Heckroth in THE TALES OF HOFFMANN.

soundtrack (recorded by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham—himself triumphantly visible in the film's closing moments), while simultaneously matching their lip movements to pre-recorded vocals by renowned opera soloists. Only Rounseville and Ayars recorded their own vocals, a fact which makes the film's accomplishment all the more remarkable. On purely visual terms, **THE TALES OF HOFFMANN**—photographed by Christopher Challis, assisted by Freddie Francis—is an unparalleled feast for the eyes; it is a feast which now, thanks to three of this set's four sides, can be savored flavor-by-flavor in CAV. Side 3 (the CLV side) features "Giulietta" and most of "Antonia," and there is no discernible loss in resolution. The film has been given a

generous 42 chapters, plus supplementary files of production and publicity stills. Two highlights of the supplements are shots of Pamela Brown painted gold for a deleted sequence.

In the Chapter 44 supplement, a subliminal blue caption card appears between Frames 29965 and 29966. By toggling back and forth between the frames, the following can be read: "Pressburger listening to score. Grim or Gay? Powell and continuity girl Pamela Davies provided contrast in mood as they watched rehearsals." Powell (gay expression) and Davies (grim expression) appear in Frame 29966, but there is no shot of Pressburger auditing the score.

Two of Voyager's previous Powell and Pressburger releases—**THE LIFE AND DEATH OF COLONEL BLIMP** and **BLACK NAR-**

CISSUS—featured marvelous and insightful commentaries by Powell himself, accompanied by Martin Scorsese. They were released posthumously, after Powell's death in 1987. While this package could only have profited from Powell's observations, the commentary tracks are enjoyably and informatively provided by Scorsese and Bruce Eder, who also narrated Criterion's superb **THE DEVIL AND DANIEL WEBSTER** [VW 11:18-19]. At one point during the "Antonia" segment, when Ann Ayars is seen running out a door on the right and immediately through the door on the *left* side of the room, Scorsese compares the shot to a moment in Mario Bava's **KILL, BABY, KILL!** [*Operazione paura*, "Operation Fear," 1966]—and I couldn't help feeling that this first collision of Bava's name and Criterion quality marked an historic epiphany of

sorts. (Of course, David Lynch has now done it too in **TWIN PEAKS FIRE WALK WITH ME.**)

An instant Criterion classic, this set marks the first time the complete **TALES OF HOFFMANN** has been available in the United States since its single screening at the Metropolitan Opera in 1951. A newly-restored 14m sequence appears at the beginning of "Antonia" and is the only straightforward passage in the entire film; the beginning of the truncated US theatrical version can be accessed at Side 3, 35:50. Before the welcome arrival of this pressing, the best available version was the Japanese import tape and disc on Tohokushinsha Home Video, which was not only missing the 14m intro to "Antonia," but was also disappointingly pale in color and time-compressed to 109m 13s!

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM

1962, MGM/UA ML102427, D/S/LB, \$39.98

George Pal followed his bitter-sweet **THE TIME MACHINE** (1960) with this winning, if somewhat fictionalized, biography of Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm. Energetically directed by Henry Levin (fresh from his collaboration with Mario Bava on **THE WONDERS OF ALADDIN**, 1961), the film dramatizes how Wilhelm (Karl Boehm), a practical and unmarried scholar of law and mathematics, supported his married brother Jacob (Laurence Harvey)'s seemingly irrational obsession with writing down every fairy story within earshot before they could corrupt from retellings. Scripted by David P. Harmon, Charles Beaumont and William Roberts, the film palpably conveys the excitement of literary research



Laurence Harvey and Puppetoon elves in George Pal's **THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM**.

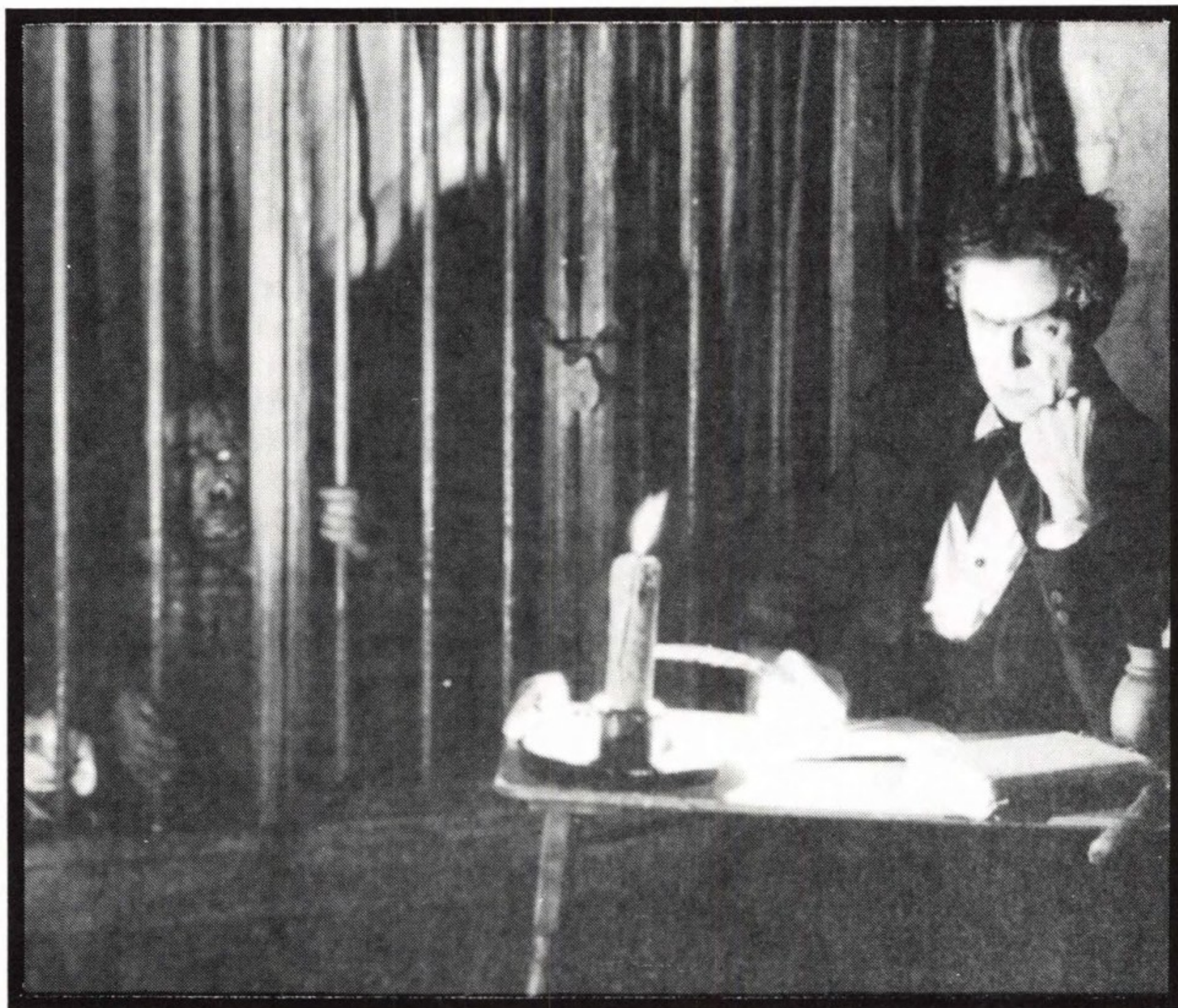
and the timeless value of a good story well-told. Harvey is especially good, not only as Jacob, but also as the Cobbler in the last of three stories—"The Dancing Princess," "The Singing Bone," and "The Cobbler and the Elves"—directed with unmistakable charm by Pal himself, which periodically interrupt the biographic narrative. Russ Tamblyn (who briefly reprises his starring role from Pal's **TOM THUMB**, 1958) dominates "The Dancing Princess" with a gleefully athletic performance, while the other two stories contain lovable stop-motion animation turns by a comic, jewel-encrusted dragon and an assortment of Pal's own, elfin Puppetoons. This was the first dramatic (ie., non-travelogue) movie lensed in Cinerama, and it makes splendid use of its Bavarian and Rhine River locations—simple train and coach rides come across with

momentous appeal. Billy Barty and Angelo Rossitto are two of the numerous uncredited members of the film's mammoth cast.

THE WONDERFUL WORLD OF THE BROTHERS GRIMM (you need Cinerama just to get the title onscreen!) is already being called the first letterboxed pan-and-scan disc: its spectacular three-screen Cinerama (3:1) process has been transferred to disc with a ratio of approximately 2.40:1—essentially, the peripheral screens are cropped in half—and the narrow image actually pans slightly to the left to catch the "L" in "Laurence Harvey" during the main title sequence! This is actually rather a petty complaint, considering that an extra screen's worth of information has been added to MGM/UA's 1.33:1 cassette transfer, and considering also that the Cinerama experience cannot be honestly replicated on a home video monitor. **WONDERFUL WORLD** was made to be projected onto a massive curved screen, and the convex dimensions of the TV screen have a way of translating spinning camera movements (as seen during Tamblyn's downhill tumble in "The Dancing Princess," and Buddy Hackett's vine-swinging in the dragon's lair of "The Singing Bone") into panoramic, undulating eyestrains. As a child, I was fortunate enough to see this film during one of its original Cinerama engagements and can attest to the fact that this two-disc set—as marvelous and welcome as it is—in no way approximates the indelible, enveloping magic and terror of that experience. That said, this disc is as good as this film is ever likely to look under these conditions, and I wouldn't be without it.



THE LETTERBOX



IN ARM'S WAY

A letter from James Singer [VW 12:63] notes that a Terminator arm survives the hijinx at the end of **T2**, and that this might pave the way for a third **TERMINATOR** film. I was recently contacted about writing Marvel's upcoming **TERMINATOR** comic book series, and while I wasn't able to take the job, I did have a look at the outlines prepared for the series by the folks at Cameron's office. Suffice to say they've come up with a variety of ways to take the story if and when they decide to make a third film, utilizing characters from **T2** in interesting and (to me) unexpected ways. None of which involve the

severed arm from the second film. Of course, these were outlines for a comic book series, not for a movie.

Maybe **T3** will be a musical.

Mark Verheiden
Pasadena, CA

*Mark's letter gives us an excuse to mention that LIVE Entertainment's "Terminator" VHS boxed set—which contains letterboxed copies of both films, a "Making Of" cassette, and a souvenir booklet—includes a new 1.85:1 transfer of **THE TERMINATOR**, not the same as last year's Hemdale/Image Entertainment laserdisc. We hear that it's a major improvement.*

FLIP FLOP

I don't think the "flipped" Weyland-Yutani symbol you noticed on the **ALIENS** boxed set [VW 10:40] was a technical slip—at least not the way you think it is. At the same frames that you mentioned [Ch. 22, 25693-25727] you'll also see 4 letters and digits that aren't flipped. Also, in the previous sequence of the Aliens vs. the first two robot sentry guns, the flipped image of a W-Y insignia is visible in the background. The same shot shows a long shot of the computer

*Bela and Erik draft an ominous missive in **MURDERS IN THE RUE MORGUE**.*

terminal that the controls sentry guns, and compared to the subsequent close-up of computer terminal, it looks right (not flipped, I mean). I think this means that some of the W-Y symbols on the set were flipped on purpose! Any comment?

Frank Kim
Urbana, IL

*David C. Fein, who worked on the supplement to the **ALIENS** "Special Widescreen Collector's Edition," confirms your opinion that the Weyland-Yutani symbol was not flipped. The scene in question unfolds in the Operations Complex which, as shown in an exterior shot featured on Side 2 (Frame 13980), is encircled by a shutter system to protect the windows from harsh winds. When these shutters are closed, Weyland-Yutani's window decals show up against them looking like reversed imprints in metal. I stand corrected.*

ORSON AROUND

I [followed reader Howard Roller's advice and] rented **MR. ARKADIN** from the Evergreen Video Society [VW 12:9]. Unfortunately, someone had dubbed the Criterion laserdisc version over the Encore Video original! Just thought you might be interested.

Kent Coscarelly
San Jose, CA

PEN PAL

In your review of the new letterbox disc of George Pal's **THE TIME MACHINE**, [VW 13:57] I was glad to see something pointed out that I haven't seen mentioned before. Your statement that the 1960 film "is not the greatest science fiction film ever made, but it is perhaps the wisest and

most humane of all speculative films" is a sentiment I have long felt to be true. Whereas most futuristic films give us a pretty bleak vision of tomorrow, Pal managed to imbue H.G. Wells' dim outlook with a humanity that permeates every scene. **THE TIME MACHINE** cost less than a million to produce and may continue to work its magic well into the year 802,701.

But a curiosity on the new laserdisc seems to have slipped past you. Since Russell Garcia's stereo score had to be remixed onto the soundtrack, the remix altered one scene. When Rod Taylor meets the son of Filby (Alan Young) in 1917 and learns that his father was killed in the war, there is a musical sting that Pal must have originally mixed out of the track. He was wise to do so because the way it is on the laserdisc is a bit heavy handed. Check out an older videocassette or the earlier laserdisc and you'll see that the original mix is quieter and the scene is more touching because of it.

As small a thing as it is, it was those sorts of choices that made **THE TIME MACHINE** the film it is today.

Kirk Henderson
San Francisco, CA

HOUSE OF THE SUDDEN CABLE

Plaudits on your superb Vincent Price issue. Price might well have made more of Joe May's excellent **THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES** [in his interview]. Recently unearthed on Showtime, this film captures Hawthorne's austere yet heroic story admirably. Price gives one of his finest performances, in this unjustifiably ignored film. Likewise, Margaret Lindsay turns in a performance that is of Academy Award caliber. This should be required viewing not only for Price

fans, but for all students of American literature and American film. It is a real gem in Universal's crown. Does anyone happen to know if Vincent Price does his own singing in the picture? The song I refer to is the haunting Frank Skinner ballad, "The Color of Your Eyes." Again, congratulations to your magazine for a worthy profile of a gifted actor, and our thanks to Mr. Price for his continued excellence.

Brent Carleton
Louisville, KY

*We were also surprised to find **THE HOUSE OF THE SEVEN GABLES** on Showtime. The unheralded broadcast of this rare item couldn't have been consigned to worse timeslots—Thank Goodness for time-shifting! Nevertheless, Vincent's performance as Clifford Pyncheon was nothing short of a revelation, one of his best ever. And yes, he did his own singing in the picture, just as he later did in numerous theatrical productions.*

VINNIE OGRAPHY 3

Great interview! Just two things not mentioned in #11:

- Vincent Price's **THIS IS YOUR LIFE** episode, which we taped off American Movie Classics recently. From the early '70s, it features Helen Hayes, Sam Arkoff, and Vincent's entire family. He is presented with awards of appreciation for his help not only with his Sears art endeavor, but also for his help with funding and supporting American Indian/Mexican folk art.
- A movie called **SCAVENGER HUNT** (1979, Fox Video) starring Richard Benjamin, Cloris Leachman and James Coco. VP plays an eccentric millionaire/game inventor, who dies in the first 5m. We hear his fabulous voice in the next 5m, leaving \$200 million to the first of his "scavenger" relatives to

finish a hunt he's put together. His role is humorous and cantankerous—he does a great 10m in an otherwise so-so film.

Dawn Hill & James Waxon
San Diego, CA

VINNIE OGRAPHY 4

I have some additions to your Vincent Price Videography:

- **MONSTERS UNMASKED VOL. TWO**—Boris Karloff in "Terror at Daybreak," a COLONEL MARCH episode, and VP in "Dream Job." Prestige Home Theatre Label, 1985, 60m. I paid \$5 for it.
- **THE BARON OF ARIZONA** is also available from Burbank Video, LP speed.
- **THE BAT** is also available from Goodtimes, in a poster art box.

Tim Murphy
El Monte, CA

VINNIE OGRAPHY 5

Here's a list of other videotapes in which Vincent Price appears or had been involved:

- **AMERICA SCREAMS** (1987) Price narrates this documentary on roller coasters.
- **DEVIL'S TRIANGLE** (1978, MGM/UA) Price narrates this documentary about strange incidents in the Bermuda Triangle.
- **HERE COMES PETER COTTONTAIL** (FHE Video) Animated. Peter battles his archrival, Evil Irontail.
- **LITTLE TROLL PRINCE: A CHRISTMAS PARABLE** (Hanna-Barbera Video) Animated. A little gnome tells why he loves Christmas.
- **MAN FROM U.N.C.L.E.: VOL 9** (MGM/UA) "The Foxes and Hounds Affair" episode. Price plays a gleefully wicked agent whose preferred weapon is an exploding handkerchief.

MONSTERS & MANIACS (Donna Michelle Prod.) Collection of film clips, rare footage and coming attractions.

MOOCH GOES TO HOLLYWOOD (1971, Liberty Video) Price cameos in this tale of a lovable mutt in Tinsel Town.

PALACE OF PETERHOF: PETER THE GREAT (1986, Video Gems) Price narrates this documentary.

PORT ARTHUR JAIL (Video Gems) Price narrates this documentary on Australia's most infamous jail.

SORCERER'S APPRENTICE (Lorimar) Animated. Price narrates.

STRANGE BUT TRUE FOOTBALL TALES (1987, NFL Video) Price hosts this look at sports' weirdest rituals, games and personalities.

TSARKO SELO, CATHERINE II (1986, Video Gems) Price hosts this documentary.

THE GREAT MOUSE DETECTIVE (1986, Disney) Voice of Prof. Rattigan.

Todd Severson
Minneapolis, MN

BAAAAAD CUTTING

Contrary to many people's beliefs, some of the Hammer films appearing on the TNT cable network have been cut. In particular, I am thinking of the recent showing of Terence Fisher's **THE DEVIL'S BRIDE** (aka **THE DEVIL RIDES OUT**, 1967). In the scene where the purple robed Satanists sacrifice the goat on the altar by slitting its throat, the TNT version shows only the results of a chalice full of blood, while the British video release shows three steaming jets of blood emitting from the animal's throat and being collected in the chalice. The running time of the TNT print was 94m, while the British cassette is 92m

and more complete! Either TNT slowed down their print or the British tape is time compressed?

Bill Knight
Coplet, PA

*TNT doesn't deny that sex and violence are sometimes censored from their films for broadcast, but neither do they announce to viewers when such measures have taken place. A recent broadcast of Freddie Francis' **TROG** included the butcher being hanged on his meathook, and the droplets of blood blotting the floor, but a last-minute zoom into the hook protruding from his neck proved to be the network's breaking point. On earlier commercial television broadcasts, the scene was sometimes cut in its entirety. The discrepancy you noticed in video running times is due to the transfer of the British material from PAL to the NTSC format.*

AND NOW... FRED OLEN RAY'S REAL ESTATE REPORT

The **CTHULHU MANSION** skull art featured in VW 12:9 is interesting, in that the house appearing inside the skull's eye is the house we used in **EVIL TOONS** [11:11]. It also appeared in **ROCK 'N ROLL HIGH SCHOOL FOREVER**, the production that painted the front steps a hideous lavender color—which is how they appear in our film, since repainting them would have cost more than we could afford!

LIES OF THE TWINS [12:10-11] should be of interest to Eurofans since it also features Richard Harrison. A good portion of the film was shot at Harrison's Malibu oceanside home.

Fred Olen Ray
Hollywood, CA



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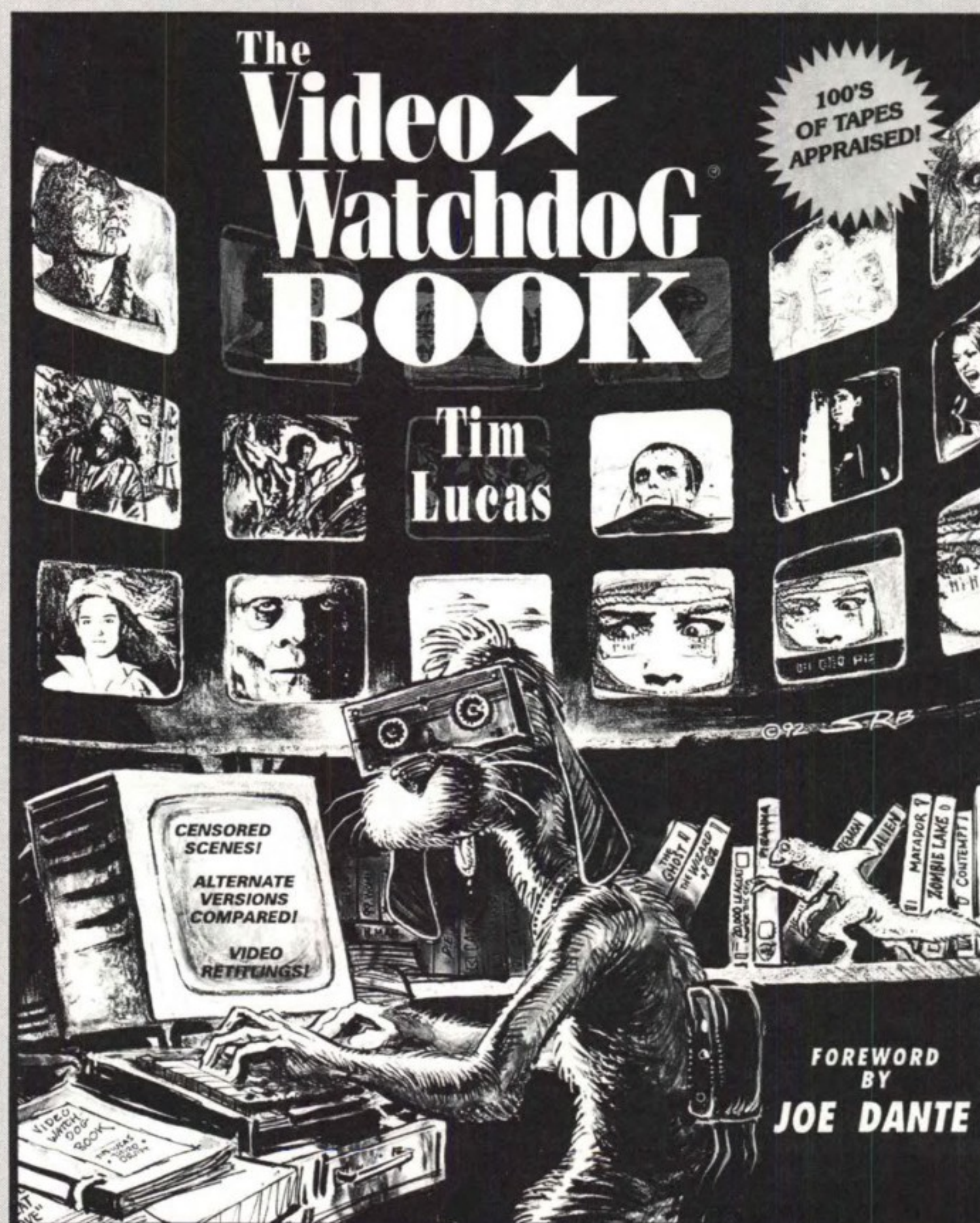
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Burlington County (NJ) Times



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